

2008 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 307

Celebrating the life of William A. Strauss.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 1, 2008
Agreed to by the Senate, February 7, 2008

WHEREAS, William A. Strauss, cofounder of the satirical group the Capitol Steps, died December 18, 2007, at his home in McLean after an eight-year battle with pancreatic cancer; and

WHEREAS, born in Chicago, William A. "Bill" Strauss spent most of his childhood in the San Francisco Bay area, and in 1963, during his junior year in high school, he was a Capitol page; and

WHEREAS, Bill Strauss graduated from Harvard University in 1969 and earned a law degree from Harvard Law School and a master's degree from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, both in 1973; and

WHEREAS, upon completing his studies at Harvard, Bill Strauss moved to Washington with his wife, where he worked for various government agencies and cowrote two books before joining the staff of Senator Charles Percy and becoming chief counsel and staff director of the Senate Subcommittee on Energy, Nuclear Proliferation and Government Processes; and

WHEREAS, the Capitol Steps were created in 1981 when Bill Strauss developed a number of musical parodies that he and his cohorts debuted at the office Christmas party; the group was an instant hit and for the next few years they performed regularly at holiday parties and other events; and

WHEREAS, by the late 1990s, Bill Strauss and the Capitol Steps had moved far beyond office parties and community gatherings; a cast of some 40 people was performing on radio, television, and around the country, including a run off-Broadway; and

WHEREAS, after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 1999, Bill Strauss started performing less and turned his attention to forming the Critics and Awards Program for High School Theater, known as the Cappies; and

WHEREAS, through the Cappies, high school students attend and review each other's shows, with top reviews published in local newspapers; in addition, top Cappies winners perform their shows at the Kennedy Center, and student creative teams, under Bill Strauss' oversight, have written two musicals; and

WHEREAS, Bill Strauss was a prolific writer, having authored or coauthored almost a dozen books on topics ranging from the Vietnam-era draft to political satire to the cyclical characteristics of American history; he also wrote three musicals; and

WHEREAS, with an incredible knack for using satire to say something meaningful about politics and politicians without being offensive, Bill Strauss brought out roars of laughter from a generation of Washington insiders and outsiders; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated, generous, and deeply caring person, Bill Strauss will be greatly missed by his wife of 34 years, Janie Strauss; their four children, Melanie, Rebecca, Victoria, and Eric, and one granddaughter; and countless other family members, friends, colleagues, and fans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of William A. Strauss, a talented and inspiring writer and performer; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of William A. Strauss as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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