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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 350

Offered February 6, 2008

Celebrating the life of Jane Maury Denton.

Patrons—Janis, Abbitt, Albo, Alexander, Amundson, Armstrong, Athey, BaCote, Barlow, Bell, Bouchard, Bowling, Brink, Bulova, Byron, Caputo, Carrico, Cline, Cole, Cosgrove, Cox, Crockett-Stark, Dance, Ebbin, Eisenberg, Englin, Fralin, Frederick, Gear, Gilbert, Griffith, Hall, Hamilton, Hargrove, Hogan, Howell, A.T., Howell, W.J., Hugo, Hull, Iaquinto, Ingram, Joannou, Johnson, Jones, D.C., Jones, S.C., Kilgore, Landes, Lewis, Lingamfelter, Lohr, Loupassi, Marsden, Marshall, D.W., Marshall, R.G., Massie, Mathieson, May, McClellan, Melvin, Merricks, Miller, J.H., Miller, P.J., Moran, Morgan, Morrissey, Nichols, Nixon, Nutter, O'Bannon, Oder, Orrock, Peace, Phillips, Plum, Pogge, Poindexter, Poisson, Purkey, Putney, Rust, Saxman, Scott, E.T., Scott, J.M., Shannon, Sherwood, Shuler, Sickles, Spruill, Suit, Tata, Toscano, Tyler, Valentine, Vanderhye, Ward, Ware, O., Ware, R.L., Watts and Wright

WHEREAS, Jane Maury Denton of Williamsburg, a heroic citizen of the Commonwealth, a devoted wife and mother, and a relentless advocate on behalf of American prisoners of war (POWs) and those missing in action (MIAs) in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, was called to her eternal reward on November 22, 2007; and

WHEREAS, a native of Mobile, Alabama, Jane Denton graduated from the Convent of the Visitation School, attended Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, and in 1946 married Ensign Jeremiah Andrew Denton, Jr., USN, on the day that he graduated from the United States Naval Academy; and

WHEREAS, in June 1965, Commander Jeremiah Denton, a naval aviator, was assigned to the Oceana Naval Air Station, and Jane Maury Denton, along with their seven children, established their home in Virginia Beach; and

WHEREAS, in July 1965, while deployed to Southeast Asia, Commander Denton was leading a bombing raid when he was shot down and taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese; and

WHEREAS, while her husband was held captive and tortured in a Hanoi prison, Jane Denton continued to raise her young family in Virginia Beach; she was instrumental in organizing and rallying the wives of other American POWs to successfully demand humane treatment and ultimate release of their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Jane Denton helped organize and lead the National League of Families of POWs and MIAs, mobilized public opinion and broad-based grassroots support, made myriad public appearances, sent out thousands of letters to lawmakers and public officials, and served as a singular source of inspiration, encouragement, and support to POWs and their families; and

WHEREAS, Jane Denton had a deep and abiding Roman Catholic faith, which nourished and sustained her and her family as she persevered in the face of extreme adversity while "*she remained a rock*" throughout the seven years and seven months of her husband's captivity; and

WHEREAS, in 1970 Jane Denton accepted the Virginia Press Women's Newsmaker of the Year Award on behalf of all the members of the National League of Families of POWs and MIAs; and

WHEREAS, on February 12, 1973, due in no small part to the efforts and advocacy of Jane Denton and thousands of dedicated volunteers, Jeremiah Denton was released from captivity in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Jane Denton remained a steadfast support to her husband, who retired from the United States Navy as a rear admiral in 1979 and was elected to the United States Senate from Alabama in 1980; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with her husband, Jane Denton turned her considerable talents and attention to the plight of the mentally ill and became a leader in national efforts to improve the quality of mental health care facilities and services; and

WHEREAS, throughout her long life of selfless service to others, Jane Denton remained an inspiration to all who knew her, and she will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her beloved husband, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and her many friends throughout the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly note with profound sadness the passing of an exceptional citizen of the Commonwealth and a true American patriot, Jane Maury Denton; 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 Jane Maury Denton as an expression of the esteem in which her memory is held by the members of the General Assembly.

INTRODUCED

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