

2009 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 995

Celebrating the life of Clay T. Whitehead.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 26, 2009
Agreed to by the Senate, February 28, 2009

WHEREAS, Clay T. Whitehead, a telecommunications pioneer from McLean, died on July 23, 2008; and

WHEREAS, a native of Kansas, Clay Whitehead was born on November 13, 1938, to Clay and Helen Hinton Whitehead and was the eldest of four children; and

WHEREAS, Clay Whitehead's interest in telecommunications began as a boy, when he spent hours on his Heathkit ham radio talking to amateur operators around the world; he went on to receive a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and

WHEREAS, Clay Whitehead worked for the RAND Corporation before he became part of the Nixon administration as the first director of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy from 1970 to 1974; and

WHEREAS, Clay Whitehead helped set in motion a policy, known as Open Skies, that allowed any qualified company to launch a domestic communications satellite, which meant potential users did not have to subscribe to one major provider; and

WHEREAS, this policy had an enormous impact on the cable industry, and later other emerging technologies such as cellular phone service and the Internet, by providing competition and lower prices; and

WHEREAS, after his service to the Nixon administration, Clay Whitehead went on to become the founding president of Hughes Communications, a satellite-manufacturing subsidiary of Hughes Aircraft Co., where he developed the Galaxy program of commercial communications satellites; and

WHEREAS, hard-working and ingenious, Clay Whitehead, a technological innovator who believed in the free market, started SES-Astra, the first private satellite business in Europe in 1983; and

WHEREAS, Clay Whitehead's hard work and vision led to major changes in federal policy that bring lower cost telecommunications services to millions of Americans today; and

WHEREAS, Clay Whitehead will be fondly remembered for his kind and generous nature and will be greatly missed by his loving wife, Margaret; children Clay and Abigail, son-in-law Clarke, and granddaughter Caroline; and many friends and admirers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly mourn the passing of a telecommunications pioneer and outstanding Virginian, Clay T. Whitehead; 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 Clay T. Whitehead as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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