

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 478

Celebrating the life of William Edward Lavery.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 25, 2009
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 27, 2009

WHEREAS, William Edward Lavery, the 12th president of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, died on February 16, 2009; and

WHEREAS, a native of New York, William Lavery received a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University, master's degree from George Washington University, and doctorate from the University of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, William Lavery began his educational career as a teacher at Clarence Central High School in New York before proudly serving two years in the United States Army during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, William Lavery then spent a decade at the federal Extension Service's Division of Management Operations before coming to Virginia Tech as director of administration of the Extension Division; he became vice president for finance in 1968 and executive vice president in 1973; and

WHEREAS, named as the 12th president of Virginia Tech effective January 1, 1975, Dr. Lavery guided the institution as it transitioned and matured into a research university and, foreseeing the impact of emerging technologies, broadened the university's use of technology; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lavery worked diligently during his tenure to increase expenditures in support of research and enhanced research opportunities through the initiation of the Corporate Research Center (CRC) and Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties; mindful of the need to attract and retain top level researchers, Dr. Lavery also worked to increase faculty salaries; and

WHEREAS, by the time of Dr. Lavery's departure as president in 1987, Virginia Tech had become one of the top 50 research institutions in the nation and faculty salaries had moved from the bottom third to the top fourth among research universities; and

WHEREAS, a visionary leader, Dr. Lavery oversaw the beginning of the installation of a new communication system for the campus, the first proposal for what later became the Blacksburg Electronic Village, and the development of 26 downlink sites throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, committed to providing Virginia Tech students and faculty with the best possible facilities, Dr. Lavery worked to alleviate shortages of classroom, laboratory, and office space, and during his term available space increased by 50.1 percent; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lavery was passionate about higher education and oversaw the establishment of a core curriculum, new degree programs, and the creation of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine; and

WHEREAS, after stepping down as president, Dr. Lavery continued to serve Virginia Tech as honorary chancellor and as the William B. Preston Professor of International Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lavery's expertise was called upon by various state and national leaders as he served on the Commission on Virginia's Transportation in the 21st Century, on the National Savings Bond Committee, where he chaired the Higher Education Industry Campaign, and as chair of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Lavery received numerous awards and accolades for his service on behalf of higher education and the Virginia Tech community, including the Brotherhood Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Ruffner Medal; the William E. Lavery Animal Health Research Center was named in his honor in 1995; and

WHEREAS, William Lavery will be sorely missed by his loving wife Peggy and their four children, Debra, Lori, Mary Beth, and K. Michael; and he leaves behind a legacy of commitment and service to higher education and the Virginia Tech community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly mourn the passing of an outstanding educational leader, William Edward Lavery; and, be it

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

ENROLLED

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