

2011 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 504

Celebrating the life of Dalton Rotruck Duling.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 14, 2011

Agreed to by the Senate, January 20, 2011

WHEREAS, Dalton Rotruck Duling of Richmond, a retired City of Richmond police sergeant better known as "Sergeant Santa," died on August 21, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the holiday time can be festive and fun, but poverty prevents many children from experiencing the delights of the season; and

WHEREAS, fortunately for the City of Richmond, a police officer by the name of Dalton "Ricky" Duling felt the call to reach out to the community; and

WHEREAS, in 1973 Ricky Duling grew a beard for an undercover assignment; his new look was noticed by a sporting goods store that asked him to portray Santa Claus; and

WHEREAS, after first refusing, Ricky Duling reconsidered and after the ad for the store was finished, he was given the Santa suit; and

WHEREAS, several weeks later, Ricky Duling was at a red light with his Santa suit in the backseat, when he noticed the red light getting bigger and bigger; he felt as if he were receiving a message that he could put on the Santa suit and give out candy to children in low-income areas; and

WHEREAS, Ricky Duling started out by buying and passing out the candy himself; as time went on, he added crayons and comic books and as the word spread about what he was doing, the volunteers began to come; and

WHEREAS, the work of "Sergeant Santa" grew over the years, with as many as 16,000 packages prepared annually; Ricky Duling became a well-known figure in the Richmond area, visiting children in hospitals and nursing homes and riding in parades; and

WHEREAS, Ricky Duling retired from the Richmond City Police Department in 1988 and volunteers helped him in expanding his work to include providing supplies to needy families year-round; and

WHEREAS, Ricky Duling enriched the lives of thousands of underprivileged children across the Richmond area for decades, providing gifts of toys and candy that helped to make their holidays merry; most importantly, his generosity helped them believe in the kindness and compassion of others; and

WHEREAS, Ricky Duling, whose beloved wife Dale passed away in 2008, will be greatly missed by his children, Darrin and Tanya and their families; his numerous friends and admirers; and the residents of Richmond whose lives he touched; 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 a remarkable Virginian, Dalton Rotruck Duling; 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 Dalton Rotruck Duling as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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