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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 736

Offered January 21, 2011

Commending Eldridge N. Cook.

Patrons—Morgan; Senator: Norment

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2010, after 70 years in business, Eldridge N. Cook closed for the last time the seafood processing plant and piers and the business known as Cook's Oyster Company Inc. and Cook's Seafood Company Inc. located on Sarah Creek in Bena, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, a grandson of slaves, Eldridge Cook was born on February 14, 1915, in Gloucester County, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Eldridge Cook completed his secondary education at age 17, which was highlighted by his association with Thomas C. Walker, a noted businessman and the first African-American attorney in Gloucester; and

WHEREAS, Eldridge Cook set out to enter the oil business, but instead purchased a truck and began transporting fresh seafood from Gloucester County and the surrounding areas to New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Savannah; and

WHEREAS, through Eldridge Cook's labors and growing business acumen, additional trucks were purchased and hauling routes were expanded in the United States as far away as California and through East Coast ports overseas to Europe and to Turkey; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, Eldridge Cook's trucks also began hauling lumber and timber for wartime use; and

WHEREAS, in 1950 Eldridge Cook formed Cook's Oyster Company Inc. and shortly thereafter began processing local seafood; through his efforts the business became a leading seafood supplier in Hampton Roads, employing nearly 250 people; and

WHEREAS, in 1996 Eldridge Cook was recognized by the *Daily Press* as one of the top 100 community leaders in Hampton Roads, gaining recognition not only for his business accomplishments but also for his efforts to encourage economic development in Gloucester County; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, recognizing not only Eldridge Cook's business and community accomplishments, but also his high regard and esteem in the seafood industry, not only in Virginia but throughout the United States, Governor L. Douglas Wilder, and subsequently in 2002, Governor Mark R. Warner, appointed Eldridge Cook to the Virginia Marine Products Board, where he served with distinction; and

WHEREAS, Eldridge Cook served as a member of the local Social Services Board and on the Gloucester Planning Commission from 1979 until 1997, when Gloucester was the fastest growing county in the Commonwealth; the Commission worked diligently to adopt for the first time in Gloucester's history zoning and other land use ordinances; and

WHEREAS, Eldridge Cook's family were founding members and throughout his life he has been a member of First Morning Star Baptist Church in Bena, Virginia, where he has served in many capacities over the years; and

WHEREAS, Eldridge Cook, throughout his life, has made many contributions not only to Virginia's seafood industry, but also to his community and his church, serving as an inspiration to every Virginian, irrespective of race or color; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend Eldridge N. Cook for his service to his business, his community, the Commonwealth, and his fellow man; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Eldridge N. Cook as an expression of the General Assembly's best wishes.

INTRODUCED

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