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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 940

Offered February 21, 2011

*Celebrating the life of Laird Peterson.*

Patron—McClellan

WHEREAS, Laird Peterson, adopted son of Virginia, entered into eternal rest on October 6, 2010, surrounded by loved ones and family; and

WHEREAS, Laird Peterson was a dedicated community activist and advocate for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community and for persons living with HIV/AIDS in Richmond and Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Laird Peterson began his community involvement in the 1970s as a volunteer for Gay Horizons, which evolved into the Center on Halsted; from 1981 to 1987, he served as a member of the organization's board, and later, he went on to become director of development, public communications, and marketing, a position he held until 1992; and

WHEREAS, Laird Peterson was actively involved as a member of the Chicago HIV Prevention Planning Group, worked on HIV programs at the Chicago Department of Public Health in 1999, participated in the Illinois Federation for Human Rights (now Equality Illinois) and the Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services; in 2006 he served on the Chicagoland World AIDS Day Steering Committee and cochaired the Chicago Forum on HIV and Aging; and

WHEREAS, Laird Peterson was a dedicated advocate of persons living with HIV/AIDS in his role as the first director of prevention services at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, prevention director at the Chicago Department of Public Health, development director at Horizons Community Services, Inc., and chief of staff for the late Illinois State Representative Larry McKeon; and

WHEREAS, Laird Peterson was recognized for his outstanding work and tireless effort on behalf of the LGBT community by Mayor Richard Daley and he was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2006; and

WHEREAS, after moving to Richmond, Laird Peterson went to work for Fan Free Clinic, where he served as Director of Social Services until his death, and he was an ardent and articulate spokesman for the needs and concerns of the LGBT community and people affected by HIV/AIDS; and

WHEREAS, a courageous humanitarian, Laird Peterson was a productive leader, advocate, and educator, and he will be remembered for his commitment to social justice; and

WHEREAS, Fan Free Clinic Executive Director Karen Legato paid tribute to Laird Peterson as "incredibly well-loved by his colleagues and clients of Fan Free Clinic," and a colleague described him as tenacious, resolute, funny, stubborn, a magnanimous mentor and lifelong friend, a hugger, loving, and doggedly committed to his advocacy work for persons affected by HIV/AIDS; and

WHEREAS, his many contributions and commitment to HIV/AIDS prevention, compassionate service to persons living with the disease, and unique ability to encourage others into action will be Laird Peterson's enduring legacy, and his memory will live in everyone who was touched by his remarkable life; 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 Laird Peterson; 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 Laird Peterson as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory and gratitude for his faithful community service and enduring spirit.

INTRODUCED

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