

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 299

Celebrating the life of John L. Roper III.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 13, 2011
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 21, 2011

WHEREAS, John L. Roper III, former chairman and CEO of Norfolk Shipbuilding and Drydock Corp., died on March 28, 2010; and

WHEREAS, a native of Norfolk, John Roper was born on January 19, 1927, to loving parents John Roper II and Sarah Roper; and

WHEREAS, John Roper attended Virginia Episcopal School and matriculated at the University of Virginia, interrupting his studies to serve his country during World War II in the United States Coast Guard; and

WHEREAS, after the war, John Roper finished his studies at the University of Virginia and went on to receive a degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and

WHEREAS, on September 29, 1951, John Roper married his sweetheart, Jane Preston "Jinnie," and they then moved to Norfolk, where he joined the family business that was founded by his grandfather in 1914; and

WHEREAS, John Roper began his career in the shipyard industry as a college student in 1946, and in 1951, he enrolled as a shipyard apprentice and worked his way up to the top executive position, ultimately taking control of the company in 1983 upon the death of his father; and

WHEREAS, a savvy businessman, John Roper built Norfolk Shipbuilding from a relatively small ship repair company into a large ship repair and shipbuilding enterprise; and

WHEREAS, with John Roper at the helm, Norfolk Shipbuilding and Drydock Corp. constructed the largest floating drydock in the western hemisphere, which allowed the company to compete and win larger contracts to build and repair ships; and

WHEREAS, Norfolk Shipbuilding and Drydock Corp. changed its name to NORSHIPCO and employment rose from approximately 1,000 employees to a peak of over 5,000 employees in the late 1970s; and

WHEREAS, John Roper continued his innovative leadership of the company until its sale to Southwest Marine in 1998; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, John Roper took a keen interest in the local community; he formed a company trust dedicated to giving to charitable organizations throughout the Hampton Roads area; and

WHEREAS, John Roper generously shared his time and talents in the community as a board member for numerous nonprofit organizations, as president of the Tidewater Chapter of the American Red Cross, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Mariners Museum, as an influential member of the Virginia Port Authority, and as a trustee of the Chrysler Museum; and

WHEREAS, an avid sportsman, John Roper enjoyed playing golf, and he adored spending time with his beloved family, including his numerous grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, John Roper will be greatly missed by his beloved wife, Jane Preston Roper; children, John, Susan, Sarah, Jane, and Hayward, and their families; and his numerous other family members, friends, and admirers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of an outstanding businessman and community servant, John L. Roper III; and, be it

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

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