

2012 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 500

Commending Dr. Thomas G. Digges, Jr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 6, 2012
Agreed to by the Senate, March 8, 2012

WHEREAS, Dr. Thomas G. Digges, Jr., a leader in technology and business, has made numerous contributions to his community and the semiconductor industry in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the son of a bacteriologist and National Institute of Standards and Technology Distinguished Scientist, Thomas "Tom" Digges developed an early interest in science and engineering; and

WHEREAS, Tom Digges showed a commitment to excellence early in life by achieving the rank of Eagle Scout and marching in the inaugural parade for President Harry Truman; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Western High School, Tom Digges went on to earn bachelor's degrees from the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech, before briefly working at Newport News Shipbuilding; and

WHEREAS, Tom Digges returned to school, following in his father's footsteps and researching "abnormal steel" as he completed a master's degree at the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, upon graduation, Tom Digges accepted an offer from the United States Naval Research Laboratory, where he had the opportunity to grow crystals of refractory metals and built a double crystal X-ray diffractometer; and

WHEREAS, Tom Digges received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to attend Lehigh University; after the completion of his doctorate, he went to work for Texas Instruments as a chief engineer, using computers to control silicon crystal growth; and

WHEREAS, in 1972 Tom Digges developed the silicon vacuum float zone technology pilot line for making ultrapure silicon; and

WHEREAS, two years later, Tom Digges prepared the geranium crystal and gave instructions to the astronaut conducting crystal growth experiments onboard the Skylab Space Station; and

WHEREAS, following his successful career at Texas Instruments, Tom Digges briefly joined Spectrolab and headed the company's silicon crystal growth before moving back to Virginia and establishing his own company, Virginia Semiconductor, Inc. (VSI); and

WHEREAS, Tom Digges led VSI as it experienced phenomenal growth and earned industry awards, such as the Photonic Spectra Circle of Excellence Award for its innovative ultrathin single crystal silicon membrane and the Blue Chip Enterprise Initiative Award from the United States Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, Tom Digges also expanded the company's export sales, earning it the Virginia District Export Council Merit Award, while his son, Thomas G. Digges II, now president of the company, led VSI as it became the first silicon company to offer online purchase of silicon wafers; and

WHEREAS, an admired business and community leader, Tom Digges served on several legislative and executive branch trade missions across the world to promote Virginia businesses and served on the Virginia College Building Authority; and

WHEREAS, Tom Digges has remained faithful to his Hokie and Cavalier roots, serving as a member of the Lawn Society and Delta Associates at the University of Virginia and as a member of the Ut Prosim Society and the College of Engineering's Committee of 100 and Advisory Board at Virginia Tech; and

WHEREAS, Tom Digges has served others as a Cub Scout leader and an usher at St. George's Episcopal Church where he made several trips to Mississippi to assist with Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts; and

WHEREAS, Tom Digges continues to serve as chief executive officer of VSI while also spending time on his 37-acre farm, where he enjoys planting trees and rebuilding a cabin from an old hunting lodge, and engaging in philanthropic work; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Dr. Thomas G. Digges, Jr., for his many remarkable professional achievements; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dr. Thomas G. Digges, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his important contributions to his community and industry in the Commonwealth.

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