

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 430

Commending the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 5, 2014

Agreed to by the Senate, March 7, 2014

WHEREAS, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., was born on December 12, 1931, in Washington County, where he graduated from Meadowview High School; he earned his undergraduate degree from Emory and Henry College and his law degree from T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., served his country valiantly as a member of the United States Air Force from 1951 to 1955; he is a veteran of the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., first ran successfully for elected office to represent Southwest Virginia from 1966 to 1969; however, the long drive from Abingdon to Richmond before the completion of Interstate 81 was difficult; therefore, he took a 20-year hiatus from life as a lawmaker to care for his young family; and

WHEREAS, from 1971 to 1989, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., served as a Substitute Judge for the Twenty-Eighth General District Court in Washington County; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., won the 6th District House of Delegates seat, which encompassed the City of Bristol and a portion of Washington County, and he was sworn in as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates in 1990; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., was a dedicated friend to the people of Southwest Virginia and from 1990 until his retirement on December 31, 2013; he ably served as a member of the House of Delegates Committees on Finance, Commerce and Labor, Rules, and for Courts of Justice; his keen understanding of the role of government and politics gave him a savvy ability to work effectively with members across the aisle to garner support for his legislation to ensure the welfare of his constituents; and

WHEREAS, a true Virginia gentleman who positively affected the lives of countless individuals throughout his political career, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., has been consistently active in church, sporting and community events, and city council and board of supervisors meetings; he is well-known for his ready handshake and friendly nature; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., is also an entrepreneur and businessman in Washington County with a successful law practice in Abingdon, and he has represented numerous clients and mentored many lawyers; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., has been involved in issues related to education, playing a key role in establishing the Commonwealth's community college system and the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., has been an active community leader in Southwest Virginia, as demonstrated by his participation and various memberships in civic organizations, including serving as a Sunday school teacher and former chairman of the council of deacons of the Abingdon Baptist Church; former chairman of the Emory and Henry College board of trustees; former post commander of American Legion Post 12; former worthy patron of the Order of the Eastern Star; former master of the Abingdon Masonic Lodge 48; former president of the Washington County Bar Association; former chairman, vice chairman, and trustee of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center; a volunteer with the Abingdon Civitan Volunteer Service Club; a Kazim Shriner; a member of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission Center, the board of trustees of the Center for Rural Virginia, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, McCabe Lodge, and the Virginia State Bar; in 1967, he received the Ernest S. Yeatts Service Award and the Abingdon Jaycees Distinguished Service Award Young Man of the Year (1966) for outstanding community service; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., practiced an "open door" policy and always has a warm smile for everyone, and during times of stress or strife, the families of Southwest Virginia in his district could rely on him for comfort and solace; and

WHEREAS, at the end of the 2013 Session of the General Assembly and after 28 years of illustrious public service, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., announced his retirement from the state legislature, effective on December 31, 2013; and

WHEREAS, upon the announcement of his retirement after 28 years of distinguished service to the Commonwealth as a member of the Virginia General Assembly, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., was honored with accolades, tributes, and best wishes by his colleagues in the Virginia House of

Delegates; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., the gentleman from Hayters Gap, on the occasion of his retirement from the Virginia General Assembly; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., the gentleman from Hayters Gap, as an expression of the General Assembly's deep gratitude and appreciation for his dedicated service to the citizens of Southwest Virginia and the Commonwealth.