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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 521

Offered April 21, 2014

*Celebrating the life of Thomas Joseph Russo.*

Patron—Comstock

WHEREAS, Thomas Joseph Russo, who was born in Norristown, Pennsylvania, on February 19, 1953, and was a resident of McLean for the past 32 years, died on January 24, 2014; and

WHEREAS, Thomas "Tom" Russo met the love of his life, Stephanie, while they attended Georgetown University, and they were married for more than 37 years; and

WHEREAS, Tom and Stephanie Russo raised four wonderful children, Katie Burkert, Dan Russo, Annie Pavia, and Joe Russo; and

WHEREAS, after receiving a bachelor's degree in accounting from Georgetown University in 1975, Tom Russo owned and operated Chadwicks restaurants, local favorites in Georgetown and Old Town Alexandria; and

WHEREAS, as a small business owner and friend of Georgetown and Alexandria, Tom Russo positively influenced many people and was considered the real-life Sam Malone of *Cheers* and George Bailey of *It's a Wonderful Life*; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the Bartenders' Ball Foundation for many years, Tom Russo helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for Washington, D.C., charities and served as chair of the foundation in 1987; and

WHEREAS, Tom Russo was honored as the 2013 Georgetown Business Person of the Year for his steadfast work and commitment to the community; and

WHEREAS, Tom Russo was a familiar face at St. John's Academy in McLean for 17 years while his children attended the school; he and his wife were honored with the inaugural St. John's Academy People of the Year Award in 2004; and

WHEREAS, as members of parent-teacher organizations at St. John's Academy and McLean High School, Tom and Stephanie Russo organized and ran a plethora of charitable auctions, races, proms, fairs, and gala events; and

WHEREAS, as a supporter of children and youth athletics, Tom Russo combined his passions by coaching McLean Little League baseball and softball, Babe Ruth baseball, CYO basketball, McLean High School summer league basketball, and Annandale youth basketball for over 30 years; and

WHEREAS, a standout basketball player at La Salle College High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he was a three-year starter and co-captain his senior year, Tom Russo was a valued member of the last freshman basketball team at Georgetown University during the 1971 - 1972 season; and

WHEREAS, despite never having smoked a cigarette, Tom Russo battled lung cancer for 20 months; he was able to soundly defeat the typical prognosis of six months, before succumbing to the disease at the age of 60; and

WHEREAS, during his battle with cancer, Tom Russo set a wonderful example for his family and friends with his strength, his courage, his faith in God, and a sense of humor that was inextinguishable; and

WHEREAS, Tom Russo accomplished his two final goals of walking his younger daughter, Annie Pavia, down the aisle and dancing with her at her wedding to Claudio Joseph and holding his first grandchild, Levi Thomas Burkert, born to his older daughter Katie and her husband, Jason; and

WHEREAS, Tom Russo, known for his warm smile, boisterous laugh, and unmatched sense of humor, had a joke for every story and jest for all occasions; he led a life filled with love and laughter, which he shared with everyone he met; and

WHEREAS, Tom Russo will be forever loved and fondly remembered by his wife of 37 years, Stephanie; daughters, Katie and Annie, and their spouses; sons, Dan and Joe; brothers, Jack and Ken; sisters, Marilyn and Janice; in-laws, Howie and Rita Meyer; and numerous other family members, friends, and admirers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of a respected citizen of the Commonwealth, Thomas Joseph Russo; 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 Thomas Joseph Russo as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.