

2014 SPECIAL SESSION I

INTRODUCED

14200142D

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5040

Offered June 11, 2014

Celebrating the life of Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr.

Patrons—Marsh, Barker, Deeds, Ebbin, Edwards, Favola, Garrett, Howell, Petersen, Puckett, Ruff, Saslaw and Wagner; Delegates: Carr, Cole, Dance, Davis, Futrell, Hope, Keam, Kory, Landes, LaRock, McQuinn, Minchew, Morrissey, Plum, Rasoul, Simon, Spruill, Surovell, Tyler, Ware and Watts

WHEREAS, Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., a native son, was born on February 17, 1995, and entered into eternal rest on April 6, 2014, in Raleigh, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., a four-year starter as a right guard for the Dinwiddie High School Generals football team, helped build the foundation for the school's first state championship in program history and led the team to a 7 - 4 overall record and a spot in the Virginia High School League Division 5 Central Region playoffs in 2012; he was honored as a top defensive player for the Generals football team in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., was also a member of the Dinwiddie High School wrestling and track teams, and upon graduation he earned a football scholarship to Saint Augustine's University, where he was an outstanding student-athlete and a computer engineering major; and

WHEREAS, Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., affectionately known as "Swamp," was a 6-foot 2-inch, 285-pound freshman offensive lineman at Saint Augustine's University and contributed defensively in his first game by tackling and forcing a fumble against Stillman College; and

WHEREAS, Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., was described by his high school football coach as a "gentle and nice person off the field but a beast on the gridiron" and as the "poster child for the Dinwiddie football program," due to his strength, determination, and sheer athleticism; and

WHEREAS, a faithful member of First Baptist Church in Petersburg, Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., was actively engaged in the youth ministry, junior and young adult choir, and Sunday School; little children were attracted to him, and he loved working with young football players; he continued to practice his faith as a member of St. Augustine's Christian Faith and Praise Ministries and assisted with the institution's Christian Fellowship; and

WHEREAS, Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., a remarkable young man with a charismatic personality, was gentle and always composed; he displayed a positive attitude regardless of the difficulty or challenge confronting him, including the football injury that caused a minor setback; he viewed the obstacle as an opportunity to return to football even stronger than before, and, during his recovery, refused the offer to take his classes online and walked to classes on crutches; and

WHEREAS, during a standing-room-only candlelight vigil at Saint Augustine's University, friends, teammates, coaches, and teachers remembered Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., as a devoted friend and a kind, generous, energetic, and warmhearted person with a strong work ethic, a brilliant smile, and a sunny disposition; and

WHEREAS, at a memorial prayer program for Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., in his home town of Dinwiddie, his family and friends supported each other in their grief and sought solace by sharing and emphasizing aspects of his life and how much he was loved and adored; and

WHEREAS, Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., an exceptionally gentle, respectful, loving, charming, and kind spirit, will be missed by his loving father, mother, brothers, relatives, church family, and devoted friends, teammates, coaches, and colleagues, as will his smile and warm embrace, and his memory will be treasured by everyone whose life he touched; 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 Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr.; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Ronald R. Cunningham, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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