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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 798

Offered February 10, 2015

Celebrating the life of John Robert Erwin.

Patrons—Toscano and Landes; Senator: Deeds

WHEREAS, John Robert Erwin of Charlottesville, a former jail chaplain and a 20-year employee of the Salvation Army in Charlottesville, who overcame great adversity in his early years to forge a life of meaning and purpose by ministering to the imprisoned and helping the less fortunate, died on December 23, 2014; and

WHEREAS, John Erwin was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, and lived in eight foster homes and four public institutions before he was 18; he credited the attention given to him by caring teachers during high school with turning his life around; and

WHEREAS, a veteran of the United States military, John Erwin served in the army during the Korean War, and after his military service enrolled at Emmaus Bible College, at that time in Chicago; he then became chaplain of the Cook County Jail in Chicago for nearly three decades; and

WHEREAS, while he was chaplain, John Erwin devised the nationally acclaimed Programmed Activities for Correctional Education Institute (PACE), offering educational opportunities and vocational training to inmates and those who had been recently released; and

WHEREAS, President James Earl Carter appointed John Erwin to the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education; in that role, he chaired public hearings in five cities and also testified before a United States Senate subcommittee on correctional education; and

WHEREAS, later in his career, John Erwin moved to Virginia and worked for Prison Fellowship; he also was executive director of the Maryland Sheriffs' Youth Ranch, a foster home for young men; and

WHEREAS, John Erwin was a dedicated and caring employee of the Salvation Army in Charlottesville who focused on helping those in need; as a man of great faith, John Erwin enjoyed fellowship and worship at Sojourners United Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, among the organizations that benefitted from John Erwin's experience and compassion were the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the Virginia Organizing, a grassroots group working to challenge injustice and bring about change; and

WHEREAS, John Erwin received many awards and recognitions in his lifetime; he was named one of "Chicago's 100," and also was honored by the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Salvation Army, where he helped found an annual Christmas Toy Convoy, which provides toys and gifts to more than 3,000 children; and

WHEREAS, John Erwin will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by Dell, his wife of 58 years; his children, Vance, Gregg, and Gayle, and their families; and by many other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of John Robert Erwin of Charlottesville, a former jail chaplain and employee of the Salvation Army in Charlottesville, who devoted his life to helping the imprisoned and the less fortunate, a man of great faith, and a devoted husband and father; 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 John Robert Erwin as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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