

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 190

Commending the Honorable Watkins Moorman Abbitt, Jr.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 16, 2015

WHEREAS, the political culture of the Commonwealth has for centuries been enriched by the participation—often in offices of leadership—of individuals rooted for generations in a particular place, and bound across the generations by ties of blood and kindred custom to the distinctive communities of their inheritance; and

WHEREAS, "the needs of the soul" adumbrated by the philosopher-saint Simone Weil begin with rootedness in enduring traditions as the sole guarantor of ordered life and livelihood, hence of political order; and

WHEREAS, each of the distinctive regions of the Commonwealth is noted for the cultivation of singular types of husbandry, industry, manner, and even accent that combine to produce the archetype by which a *Virginian* may be recognized from among all the peoples of the earth; and

WHEREAS, unique among the regions of the Commonwealth, the Southside of Virginia, graced by small towns within an expanse of farmland and woods, has contributed an array of historical and political figures noted at once for the virtues of the soil—patience, diligence, endurance, artfulness, and wisdom notable among them; and

WHEREAS, the mystical influences of the scorching sun of high summer, of the soft sideways light of the low sun of deep winter, of the colorful rituals of spring as seeds planted in autumn burst forth in new life, the companionship of animals, and the conversation of the front porch are among the shared experiences that combine to form the distinctive character of the citizen—and of the politician—of the Southside; and

WHEREAS, for these reasons and more, the Southside is famed for breeding men and women fierce alike in their loyalties and enmities and unyielding in the defense of their liberties; and

WHEREAS, one of the signal embodiments of these characteristics and of this heritage is the Honorable Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr., of Appomattox; and

WHEREAS, the forebears of Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr., have been settled in Appomattox and the surrounding Southside since the colonial era, so that, verily, their history is part and parcel of every Virginian's history; and

WHEREAS, the making of history, including by service in elective office, is as it were second nature to the life and lineage of Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr., who was an esteemed member of the Virginia House of Delegates for a full quarter-century; and

WHEREAS, this is the year of the Sesquicentennial of the dramatic conclusion of the War Between the States for the fabled Army of Northern Virginia, whose surrender occurred in tiny Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865; and

WHEREAS, among those who laid down his arms alongside those of General Robert E. Lee on that fateful Spring day in 1865 was Colonel George W. Abbitt—the great-grandfather of Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Colonel George W. Abbitt, who was born in Appomattox in 1826, enlisted in the Confederate States Army on June 19, 1861, only a month before the first major battle of the War at Manassas; and

WHEREAS, George W. Abbitt fought continuously through the war with Company B of the 46th Virginia Infantry, rising by the Spring of 1865 to the rank of captain; and

WHEREAS, Captain George W. Abbitt was awarded a field promotion to colonel for bravery in saving the life of General Henry A. Wise—formerly Governor of Virginia—in the bloody Battle of Sailor's Creek near Farmville on April 6, 1865; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Honorable Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr., hereby be commended for the centuries of contributions to the history of Virginia by which his family—himself of course included—has been characterized; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Honorable Watkins M. Abbitt, Jr., upon the occasion of his remarks at a ceremony on April 9, 2015, in—fittingly—Appomattox Court House, honoring the Sesquicentennial of the sanguinary adventures that occurred within his community, indeed, within the bounds of the very land upon which he himself resides, on April 9, 1865.