

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 267

Celebrating the life of Joe Hampton France.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 15, 2015
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 23, 2015

WHEREAS, Joe Hampton France, an admired business, civic, and community leader and beloved citizen of the Commonwealth whose generosity touched countless individuals, died on May 29, 2014; and

WHEREAS, a native of Sangerville, Joe France was raised in the Palmyra area of Fluvanna County, and graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University with a degree in civil engineering; he married his beloved wife, Martha Anne, before settling in Manassas; and

WHEREAS, with a handshake agreement in 1962, Joe France and Charlie Ross founded the award-winning civil engineering firm Ross, France & Ratliff in Manassas; they continued to work together for 52 years, forming a lifelong friendship based on that handshake; and

WHEREAS, under Joe France's leadership, Ross, France & Ratliff built an elegant and much-admired headquarters building on Sudley Road in Manassas, utilizing a classic architectural style; and

WHEREAS, Joe France was appointed by the Manassas City Council to the City of Manassas Economic Development Authority (EDA) and elected chair of the EDA, a position he held until his passing; and

WHEREAS, a savvy businessman who wanted to help other businesses flourish, Joe France was elected to the Flory Small Business Center, Inc., board of directors in 1991; and

WHEREAS, a man of the highest integrity, Joe France was elected chair of the Flory Small Business Center board in 1992 and reelected 22 times; he served as chair until his death, sharing his business skills and wisdom with the Flory Small Business Center's distinguished board of directors, staff, and clients; and

WHEREAS, Joe France was a valuable resource to the board and staff of the Flory Small Business Center's economic development program, using his substantial business talents to analyze issues, bring people together, propose solutions to many diverse business issues, and work behind the scenes to promote economic development; and

WHEREAS, Joe France brought his considerable skills and positive attitude to the Shenandoah Valley, where he shared his business acumen with the Mather Architects in Harrisonburg and enjoyed doing rewarding work and riding his John Deere tractor on the family farm in McGaheysville; and

WHEREAS, committed to the well-being of his neighbors, Joe France was an active and faithful member of Grace United Methodist Church, serving in the choir, on the administrative board, and as a teacher of the progressive Sunday School; and

WHEREAS, generous with his time and resources, Joe France was an active Rotarian; he served as president of the Rotary Club of Manassas and was a Paul Harris Fellow; and

WHEREAS, Joe France never met a stranger, and he offered his good nature and substantial talents to a wide variety of businesses and economic, civic, and community organizations; and

WHEREAS, believing deeply in the value of hard work and dedication, Joe France never retired and continued to serve the members of the community until the end of his life; and

WHEREAS, Joe France was extremely proud of his children, Susan, Leigh Anne, and John, and their families, and he cared deeply for his five grandchildren, who knew him as Papa Joe; and

WHEREAS, Joe France will forever be lovingly remembered and greatly missed by numerous family members, friends, employees, colleagues, and members of the community; 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 an exceptional Virginian, Joe Hampton France; and, be it

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