

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 3

Commemorating the life and legacy of Gilbert Keith Chesterton.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 15, 2016

WHEREAS, there arise in any generation only a few thinkers and writers able to articulate the universal and unchanging truths that are to be discerned within even the most ephemeral particularities of a given life or epoch; and

WHEREAS, it was because of this singular vocation of the writer as champion of the permanent things that the great Samuel Johnson was moved to observe that "the chief glory of every people arises from its authors"; and

WHEREAS, the South's own William Faulkner added to this testimony of the high office of the writer in stating that the man—or woman—of letters must engage nothing less than "the old verities and truths of the human heart," because the literary imagination in its highest forms not only expresses "the record of man" but "can be one of the . . . pillars to help him endure and prevail"; and

WHEREAS, Gilbert Keith "G.K." Chesterton was such a thinker, writer, and poet; and

WHEREAS, G.K. Chesterton (1874 - 1936) wrote 80 books, hundreds of poems, 200 short stories, 4,000 essays, and several plays; and

WHEREAS, G.K. Chesterton was also a literary and social critic, historian, theologian, renowned public debater, and contributor to all of the leading journals of his time and an editor of his own journal, *G.K.'s Weekly*; and

WHEREAS, virtually all of Chesterton's major works remain very much in print—80 years after his death—thus proving the singular purchase of his mind and writings on the high and mysterious correlation between the temporal and the eternal; and

WHEREAS, G.K. Chesterton strove above all to summon readers—and whole nations—to order, or "sanity," in a time of profound disorder, as evidenced in such pithy declarations as these:

"The whole difficulty in our public problems is that some men are aiming at cures which other men would regard as worse maladies";

"What is wrong with the world . . . is that we do not ask what is right";

"Men invent new ideals because they dare not attempt old ideals";

"The lost causes are exactly those which might have saved the world";

"The great ideals of the past failed not by being outlived, but by not being lived enough";

"In everything that is worth doing there is a stage when no one would do it, except for necessity or honor";

"When you break the big laws, you do not get freedom; you do not even get anarchy. You get the small laws";

"To have a right to do a thing is not at all the same as to be right in doing it";

"Fallacies do not cease to be fallacies because they become fashions";

"Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about";

"An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is an adventure wrongly considered";

"One of the deepest and strangest of all human moods is the mood which will suddenly strike us perhaps in a garden at night, or deep in sloping meadows, the feeling that every flower and leaf has just uttered something stupendously direct and important, and that we have by a prodigy of imbecility not heard or understood it. There is a certain poetic value, and that a genuine one, in this sense of

having missed the full meaning of things. There is a beauty, not only in wisdom, but in this dazed and dramatic ignorance"; and

WHEREAS, *The Chesterton Review*, now in its 41st year of publication, has been indispensable in preserving and advancing both scholarly and general studies of the life and legacy of G.K. Chesterton; and

WHEREAS, Fr. Ian Boyd, C.S.B., now 80, is founding editor of *The Chesterton Review*, professor of English literature at Seton Hall University, and one of the most renowned of all Chestertonian students, readers, and teachers in the entire world; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby commemorate the life and legacy of Gilbert Keith Chesterton on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of his death; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to professor Fr. Ian Boyd, C.S.B., on the occasion of his visit to Richmond to offer his reflections for "An Evening of G.K. Chesterton."