

16104196D

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 143

Offered February 4, 2016

*Celebrating the life of Elaine Nunez McConnell.*

Patrons—Marsden, Barker, Ebbin, Favola, Howell, Petersen, Saslaw, Surovell and Wexton; Delegate: Filler-Corn

WHEREAS, Elaine Nunez McConnell of Springfield, founder of Accotink Academy, a member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for 24 years who was a strong advocate for better public safety and improved transportation in the region, and a devoted wife and mother, died on January 10, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Elaine McConnell was a native of Jacksonville, Florida; she met her husband, Warren "Mac" McConnell, when he was in the United States Navy and was briefly stationed in Jacksonville; the couple married in 1946 and lived in Florida until they moved to the West Springfield area in 1961; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, Elaine McConnell opened Accotink Academy, a preschool in Northern Virginia that emphasized learning and play for young boys and girls; eventually, the school expanded to include kindergarten and first grade; and

WHEREAS, when the school began teaching older children, Elaine McConnell became aware of the challenges and the educational needs facing children with learning and emotional disabilities; she soon opened the first school in the Washington, D.C., area focused on children with those special needs; and

WHEREAS, at the request of citizens, Elaine McConnell entered politics in 1983 and won election to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors representing the Springfield District; during her 24-year tenure, she focused on the region's transportation, public safety, and education needs; and

WHEREAS, Elaine McConnell's steadfast focus on improving public safety in rapidly growing Fairfax County resulted in the construction of the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center, which opened in 2008; the center expedites emergency responses for agencies throughout Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Elaine McConnell helped secure funding for the Fairfax County Parkway; she played a key role in the creation of the Virginia Railway Express commuter line, working diligently to persuade railroad freight companies to allow a commuter train company to share their tracks; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Railway Express (VRE) began operating in 1992; Elaine McConnell was one of its founding board members, and the railroad now serves an average of 20,000 passengers daily on 30 trains, with one of the VRE cars being named in Elaine McConnell's honor; and

WHEREAS, as a determined, effective, and passionate elected official for the people of Fairfax County, Elaine McConnell stood up for causes that were important to her; she was respected for her warm presence and was known to bring homemade cakes and other dishes to colleagues and local first responders; and

WHEREAS, Elaine McConnell made many valuable contributions to the area as a member of numerous boards and commissions; most recently, she was appointed to a two-year term on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority; and

WHEREAS, Elaine McConnell will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by her husband, Mac; children, Susan, Mark, and Matthew, and their families; and many other family members and friends; 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 Elaine Nunez McConnell of Springfield, the founder of Accotink Academy, who admirably served the people of Fairfax County as a member of the Board of Supervisors for 24 years, focusing on public safety and public transportation issues; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Elaine Nunez McConnell as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

SJ143