

2016 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 69

Celebrating the life of Colonel Fred V. Cherry, Sr., USAF, Ret.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 10, 2016

WHEREAS, Colonel Fred V. Cherry, Sr., USAF, Ret., of Silver Spring, Maryland, a patriotic veteran who endured seven years of captivity as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam, died on February 16, 2016; and

WHEREAS, a native of Suffolk, Fred Cherry learned the value of hard work and responsibility at a young age as the child of farmers; he graduated from Virginia Union University in 1951; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of service to his country, Fred Cherry joined the United States Air Force and flew more than 100 combat missions during the Korean War and the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, on October 22, 1965, Fred Cherry was shot down over North Vietnam; he sustained severe injuries during ejection and was captured immediately upon landing; he was held in captivity for 2,671 days, including 702 days in solitary confinement, and courageously endured torture and harsh reprisals by enemy forces; and

WHEREAS, during his captivity, the North Vietnamese paired Fred Cherry with Porter Halyburton, a white southerner, in hopes of creating and exploiting racial tensions between the men as a propaganda victory; the two men instead supported and inspired each other, building the foundation for a lifelong friendship; and

WHEREAS, Fred Cherry was released on February 12, 1973, and was in the first group of prisoners of war to return to the United States; he earned the Air Force Cross for his personal fortitude and persistence in the face of extreme mistreatment; and

WHEREAS, after attending the National War College and the Defense Intelligence School in Washington, D.C., Fred Cherry retired from the United States Air Force in 1981 as a joint staff officer assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency; and

WHEREAS, Fred Cherry was featured in a public television documentary about prisoners of war in Vietnam, and he and Porter Halyburton gave talks about their experiences at military institutions and colleges; they were the subject of the book, *Two Souls Indivisible: The Friendship That Saved Two POWs in Vietnam*; and

WHEREAS, Fred Cherry will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his longtime partner, Debra; his children, Frederick, Donald, Fred, Deborah, and Cynthia, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Colonel Fred V. Cherry, Sr., USAF, Ret., a distinguished veteran of the Korean and Vietnam Wars; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Colonel Fred V. Cherry, Sr., USAF, Ret., as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

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