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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 812

Offered January 23, 2017

Celebrating the life of Elizabeth Florence Kennedy LaGrua.

Patrons—Rasoul, Bloxom, Boysko, Carr, Heretick, Hope, Krizek, Landes, Lindsey, Plum, Simon and Ware; Senators: Edwards, Howell and Surovell

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Florence Kennedy LaGrua, a tireless advocate for social justice in the Staunton community, died on October 25, 2016; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth LaGrua graduated from Immaculata High School in Chicago, Illinois, where she was a member of the Civil Air Patrol, and, in 1956, she received the Illinois Female Cadet Award from the United States Air Force; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth LaGrua attended Lewis College in Lockport, Illinois, on a four-year scholarship, and she was the first woman to graduate from the Industrial Arts and Aviation Program in 1959; and

WHEREAS, after earning a master's degree in counseling psychology from Boston College, Elizabeth LaGrua moved to an Indian reservation in Concho, Oklahoma, where she taught high school science and was responsible for planting, harvesting, and canning food for the tribal school; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth LaGrua next settled in Chester, New Jersey, where she founded Westmont Montessori School, served as the guidance counselor at Black River Middle School, and went on to become a curriculum coordinator for the New Jersey Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth LaGrua was the head coach of the New Jersey Special Olympics Gymnastics Team and coordinated the gymnastics program for the Garden State Games; she also handled publicity for the gymnastics team from Feigley's School Of Gymnastics in South Plainfield, New Jersey, where she reported on her children's accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, at age 40, Elizabeth LaGrua went back to school to learn computer programming, and she went to work as a senior computer systems analyst for Bobst Group in Roseland, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from the Bobst Group, Elizabeth LaGrua settled in Staunton, where she took up social advocacy as her primary profession and became known as a tireless crusader for peace and justice, anti-discrimination policies, and quality health care for all individuals; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth LaGrua served passionately as a leader in the Augusta Coalition for Peace and Justice, Virginia Organizing Committee, Augusta County Democratic Committee, and on the Social Action Committee of the Waynesboro Unitarian Fellowship; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth LaGrua was a model of courage and dedication to all who knew her, especially to the younger generation of social activists whom she encouraged; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by her husband, Michael, and a son, Paul, Elizabeth LaGrua will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her children, Trish, James, Thomas, Daniel, and Maureen, and their families, and many other relatives and good friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Elizabeth Florence Kennedy LaGrua, a tireless advocate for social justice in the Staunton community; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Elizabeth Florence Kennedy LaGrua as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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