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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 317

Offered January 18, 2017

*Celebrating the life of Clarence L. Townes, Jr.*

Patrons—McClellan and Dance

WHEREAS, Clarence L. Townes, Jr., a deeply admired leader and mentor in the Richmond community and one of the founders of what is now Venture Richmond, died on January 11, 2017; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong resident of Richmond, Clarence Townes graduated from Armstrong High School and earned a bachelor's degree from Virginia Union University; he served his country in the United States Army during the Korean War, then returned home to pursue a career in insurance; and

WHEREAS, in 1965, Clarence Townes ran unsuccessfully for the House of Delegates but made history as the Republican Party's first African American candidate in modern times; from 1966 to 1970, he served as assistant to the chair of the Republican National Committee; and

WHEREAS, Clarence Townes later founded the Joint Center for Political Studies, which was associated with Howard University and provided valuable mentorship to young African American leaders throughout the southern United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Clarence Townes served as the founding deputy director of Richmond Renaissance, now Venture Richmond, a partnership between city government and businesses to promote economic development; and

WHEREAS, as executive director of Richmond Renaissance from 1991 until his well-earned retirement in 1998, Clarence Townes built trust between city officials and the business community and made many lasting contributions to downtown Richmond; and

WHEREAS, a staunch advocate for the importance of a good education, Clarence Townes provided leadership to the board of Virginia Commonwealth University and the Richmond School Board; and

WHEREAS, Clarence Townes worked to enhance the community as commissioner of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, as board chair of the Metropolitan Richmond Convention and Visitors Bureau, and as a board member of Consolidated Bank and Trust Co.; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by one son, Clarence III, Clarence Townes will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Grace; children, Michael, Lisa, and June, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; 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 Clarence L. Townes, Jr., a pillar of the Richmond community; and, be it

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

INTRODUCED

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