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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 410

Offered February 15, 2017

Celebrating the life of Earl Hamner, Jr.

Patrons—Deeds; Delegates: Bell, Richard P. and Fariss

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner, Jr., a Virginia native who brought the idyllic mountain lifestyle of the Blue Ridge into countless American homes as the writer and narrator of *The Waltons*, died on March 24, 2016; and

WHEREAS, born in Schuyler, a small mining community in Nelson County, Earl Hamner was the eldest of eight children and learned the value of hard work and responsibility at a young age during the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner learned to read by the age of four and developed a passion for the written word; his first work, a poem titled "My Dog," was published on the children's page of the *Richmond Times Dispatch*; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner attended the University of Richmond on a scholarship, then joined many of the other young men of his generation in service to the nation during World War II as a member of the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, after his honorable military service, Earl Hamner completed his education at the University of Cincinnati, where he interned at a local radio station, then went to work as a staff writer for NBC in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner published his first book, *Fifty Roads to Town*, in 1953 and wrote scripts for *The Twilight Zone* in the 1960s; his semi-autobiographical novel *Spencer's Mountain* was adapted into a feature film in 1963 and was the precursor to his hit television show, *The Waltons*; and

WHEREAS, *The Waltons* followed a large rural Virginia family during the Great Depression and World War II, with Earl Hamner as the wise, reassuring narrator, providing an introduction and postscript to each episode; the long-running show was well-known for its sentimentality and sense of togetherness; and

WHEREAS, possessing a wide range as a writer, Earl Hamner wrote and produced *Falcon Crest*, a show about a scheming group of winery owners that could not have been further from the timeless warmth of the Walton family; and

WHEREAS, never losing his affection for folkways, old stories, and a sense of community and tradition, Earl Hamner produced adaptations of *Heidi* and *Charlotte's Web*, in addition to several other movies and television series after *The Waltons* and *Falcon Crest*; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner earned many awards and accolades for his work, including five Christopher Awards, the 1972 George Foster Peabody Award, and a Primetime Emmy Award for *The Waltons*; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Earl Hamner held true to his personal vision for media as an affirmation of the innate goodness of the human spirit, the importance of learning from the past, and the power of childhood imagination and hopefulness; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 61 years, Jane; children, Scott and Caroline, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and fans of his work; 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 Earl Hamner, Jr., a well-known writer and television and film producer who was deeply inspired by his Virginia roots; and, be it

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

INTRODUCED

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