

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 37

Celebrating the life of Lieutenant General Samuel Vaughan Wilson, USA, Ret.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 2, 2018

WHEREAS, Lieutenant General Samuel Vaughan Wilson, USA, Ret., a patriotic veteran of World War II who dedicated his life to serving and safeguarding the citizens of the United States through his visionary leadership in the intelligence, military, and special operations communities, died on June 10, 2017; and

WHEREAS, a native of Rice, Samuel "Sam" Vaughan Wilson learned the value of hard work and responsibility on his family's tobacco farm; desirous to be of service to the Commonwealth and the nation, he lied about his age and enlisted in the Virginia National Guard at 16 years old; and

WHEREAS, Sam Wilson became a second lieutenant at the age of 18 and served as an instructor at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he taught guerrilla warfare and counter-insurgency tactics; in 1943, he was one of the first recruits to join the Office of Strategic Services, the wartime precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency; and

WHEREAS, Sam Wilson volunteered for the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), the famous Merrill's Marauders, who carried out missions deep behind enemy lines in the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II; and

WHEREAS, after the war, Sam Wilson studied languages and worked as a liaison and courier in Soviet bloc countries before joining the Central Intelligence Agency; during this period, he continued his work on insurgency and counter-insurgency doctrine and played a key staff support role during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962; and

WHEREAS, Sam Wilson went on to command the 6th Special Forces Group, was assistant division commander for operations of the 82nd Airborne, and was the first United States Defense Attaché assigned to the embassy in Moscow; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, Sam Wilson served as Deputy to the Director of Central Intelligence for the Intelligence Community and as Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, guiding the agency through significant world events; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, Sam Wilson retired from the United States Army and returned to his family home in Rice; he continued to serve the nation long after his retirement, co-authoring the legislation that established United States Special Operations Command and revolutionized the special operations community; and

WHEREAS, after his return to civilian life, Sam Wilson joined the faculty of Hampden-Sydney College as a professor; he later became president of the college for eight years, founding the Wilson Center for Leadership and inspiring countless students during his distinguished tenure; and

WHEREAS, in later life, Sam Wilson shared his calming presence and wise counsel with corporations, civic organizations, heads of the Central Intelligence Agency, military officials, and United States Presidents, using his wealth of knowledge to quietly help others achieve their fullest potential as leaders while strengthening the Commonwealth and the United States in the process; and

WHEREAS, Sam Wilson's military decorations included the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit, and the Bronze Star, among others; he received many other civilian awards and accolades, including multiple honorary doctorates; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, the Virginia Cultural Laureate Foundation named Sam Wilson the Cultural Laureate for Public Service to honor his lifetime of contributions as a soldier, diplomat, leader, and scholar; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his first wife, Brenda, Sam Wilson will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Virginia; his children, Samuel, Jr., Jackson, David, William, Susan, and Frances, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and fellow service members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Lieutenant General Samuel Vaughan Wilson, USA, Ret., a true member of the Greatest Generation and one of the forefathers of the American special operations 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 Lieutenant General Samuel Vaughan Wilson, USA, Ret., as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

ENROLLED

HR37ER