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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 701

Offered January 11, 2019

Celebrating the life of Captain Alvin Deon Branch, USN, Ret.

Patrons—Miyares and Thomas; Senators: Barker, Black, Boysko, Carrico, Chafin, Chase, Cosgrove, Dance, Deeds, DeSteph, Dunnivant, Ebbin, Edwards, Favola, Hanger, Howell, Lewis, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, Mason, McClellan, McDougle, McPike, Newman, Norment, Obenshain, Peake, Petersen, Reeves, Ruff, Saslaw, Spruill, Stanley, Stuart, Sturtevant, Suetterlein, Surovell and Wagner

WHEREAS, Captain Alvin Deon Branch, USN, Ret., a patriotic veteran who was deeply devoted to his country, community, and family, died on September 2, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Deon Branch learned the value of responsibility at a young age while working at his family business, the Lynn-Dee Motel in Virginia Beach, and graduated from Maury High School in 1946; and

WHEREAS, Deon Branch attended Bullis Preparatory Academy, then entered the United States Naval Academy and was commissioned as an officer in 1951; he subsequently earned a master's degree from the Naval Postgraduate School; and

WHEREAS, during his 30-year military career, Deon Branch served in Korea; was stationed aboard the USS *Miller*, USS *Iowa*, USS *Hazelwood*, and USS *Newport News*; commanded the USS *San Joaquin County*, USS *Sussex*, USS *Cromwell*, USS *Barney*, and USS *Neosho*; achieved the rank of commodore; and worked at the Pentagon; and

WHEREAS, Deon Branch earned numerous awards and accolades, including the Navy Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, European Occupation Service Medal, Korean Service Medal with Two Bronze Stars, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, and United Nations Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, Deon Branch's expertise in mathematics, particularly his brilliance with algorithms and statistics, served him well in his second career as a stock and commodity broker for E. F. Hutton on the New York and Miami Stock Exchanges and later as a tutor to his beloved granddaughters; and

WHEREAS, an active member of the community with a zest for life, Deon Branch relished opportunities to entertain family and friends at crab-picking parties and other gatherings at his home in Virginia Beach, where he was a longtime member of the Princess Anne Country Club; and

WHEREAS, at the age of 60, Deon Branch was paralyzed as a result of a spinal cord injury suffered 44 years earlier in a hunting accident near Camp Ashby, which housed German prisoners of war, who stabilized his wounds and helped carry him to Norfolk General Hospital on a makeshift stretcher, ultimately saving his life; and

WHEREAS, after the accident, Deon Branch went on to become a celebrated athlete, both recreationally and in service to his country, and, later in life, his positive attitude and unwillingness to be defined by his injury were inspirational to friends and family; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his wife, Jacqueline, and son, Deon, Jr., Captain Deon Branch will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his daughter, Dee, and her family, and numerous other family members and 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 Captain Alvin Deon Branch, USN, Ret., a distinguished veteran and a respected member of the Virginia Beach 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 Captain Alvin Deon Branch, USN, Ret., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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