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**HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 450**

Offered February 21, 2019

*Celebrating the life of Eldridge N. Cook.*

Patron—Hodges

WHEREAS, Eldridge N. Cook, a lifelong resident of Gloucester County and an accomplished businessman who was known nationally as the owner of Cook's Oyster and Seafood Company, died on February 8, 2014; and

WHEREAS, a grandson of slaves, Eldridge Cook was born on February 14, 1915, in Gloucester County, Virginia; as a youth, he was mentored by Thomas C. Walker, who was the first African American attorney in Gloucester; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from high school, Eldridge Cook considered entering the oil business, but instead purchased a truck and began transporting fresh seafood from Gloucester County and the surrounding areas to New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Savannah; and

WHEREAS, through Eldridge Cook's perseverance, the company purchased additional trucks and expanded hauling routes in the United States as far away as California and through East Coast ports overseas to Europe and to Turkey; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, Eldridge Cook supported the war effort by using his trucks to haul lumber and timber; and

WHEREAS, after the war, Eldridge Cook formed Cook's Oyster Company, Inc., and shortly thereafter began processing local seafood; through his efforts the business became a leading seafood supplier in Hampton Roads, employing nearly 250 people; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Eldridge Cook was recognized by the *Daily Press* as one of the top 100 community leaders in Hampton Roads, gaining recognition not only for his business accomplishments but also for his efforts to encourage economic development in Gloucester County; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his business acumen, community service, and national leadership in the seafood industry, Governor L. Douglas Wilder and Governor Mark R. Warner successively appointed Eldridge Cook to the Virginia Marine Products Board, where he served with distinction; and

WHEREAS, Eldridge Cook served as a member of the local Social Services Board and on the Gloucester Planning Commission from 1979 until 1997, when Gloucester was the fastest growing county in the Commonwealth; he supported the commission's work to adopt zoning and other land use ordinances for the first time in county history; and

WHEREAS, Eldridge Cook enjoyed fellowship and worship with the community at First Morning Star Baptist Church in Bena, where his family were founding members and he had served the congregation in many capacities over the years; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his wife of 50 years, Velma, and his son, Eldridge, Jr., Eldridge Cook will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his sister, Betty, and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Eldridge N. Cook, a respected businessman and member of the Gloucester County 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 Eldridge N. Cook as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

HR450