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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 311

Offered February 24, 2020

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Gerald L. Baliles.

Patrons—McQuinn and Keam

WHEREAS, the Honorable Gerald L. Baliles, a consummate public servant who dedicated a lifetime of leadership to the residents of the Commonwealth as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, an Attorney General, and the 65th Governor of Virginia, died on October 29, 2019; and

WHEREAS, a native of Patrick County, Gerald Baliles grew up on his grandparents' farm and began to develop his commitment to lifelong learning at a young age; he attended Fishburne Military School, where he served as battalion commander of the Corps of Cadets, and then received a bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University in Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Baliles returned to the Commonwealth to earn a law degree from the University of Virginia; he then worked for the Office of the Attorney General and in private practice in the Richmond area, specializing in environmental law; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service to the Commonwealth, Gerald Baliles ran for election to the Virginia House of Delegates and represented the residents of Richmond and Henrico County in the 35th District for three terms, beginning in 1976; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, Gerald Baliles was elected Attorney General and was subsequently chosen by his peers as Outstanding Attorney General of the United States; and

WHEREAS, four years later, Gerald Baliles was elected Governor of Virginia after running with the most diverse ticket in state history, which included Attorney General Mary Sue Terry, the first woman to hold a statewide office in the Commonwealth, and Lieutenant Governor L. Douglas Wilder, who later became the first African American Governor of Virginia; he maintained his commitment to diversity by appointing numerous women and minorities to state boards and commissions; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Baliles set clear goals for each of his four years in office, and his unparalleled focus and attention to detail helped him successfully enact policies related to transportation funding, expanded family and mental health care services, support for public education, and environmental protection; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Baliles strengthened the Virginia economy by improving port facilities and increasing global trade, and he traveled to more than 20 countries, significantly enhancing the Commonwealth's international profile; his policies resulted in the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, known for his humility, moderate temperament, and "boldly cautious" leadership style, Gerald Baliles balanced the concerns and priorities of both rural and urban Virginians and worked to build respect and bipartisan consensus, noting once that kindness and civility can often achieve for the public good what energy and passion alone cannot; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, Gerald Baliles joined the firm Hunton & Williams and specialized in aviation and international law; in 1995, he was appointed by President Bill Clinton to a blue ribbon commission on improving the airline industry, which led to many new safety and operational policies; and

WHEREAS, after 16 years with Hunton & Williams, Gerald Baliles became director and chief executive officer of the University of Virginia Miller Center of Public Affairs, one of the nation's leading institutions on presidential scholarship; he subsequently returned to Patrick County, where he created the Patrick County Educational Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Gerald Baliles will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 16 years, Robin; his children, Laura, Jonathan, Katherine, and Danielle, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; 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 the Honorable Gerald L. Baliles; 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 the Honorable Gerald L. Baliles as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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