

2020 SPECIAL SESSION I

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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 539

Offered September 9, 2020

Celebrating the life of Bruce Winston Edwards.

Patrons—DeSteph and Kiggans

WHEREAS, Bruce Winston Edwards, a husband, father, teacher, and mentor, passed away peacefully from his family and friends on August 22, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Edwards graduated from Norview High School and from Old Dominion University, earning an MPA, with plans to become a teacher; and

WHEREAS, when his father suffered his first heart attack in 1967, Bruce Edwards, wanting to learn how to protect his family, joined the Ocean Park Volunteer Fire and Rescue Unit and rose to the rank of Assistant Fire and Rescue Chief; his life's work and passion for pre-hospital care had just begun; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, Bruce Edwards was elected as a Life Member of Ocean Park Volunteer Rescue Squad, remaining an active member and paramedic while also becoming involved with the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads (VAVRS); he represented Ocean Park before VAVRS for 35 years and served as the by-laws chair for 18 years, being an expert on Robert's Rules of Order, then was elected to Life Membership in the VAVRS in 2009; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Edwards was appointed in 1973 as the Executive Director of the Emergency Coronary Care Program in Virginia Beach that generated the first Advance Life Support (ALS) technicians in the Commonwealth of Virginia; from 1975 to 1984, he was responsible for the pre-hospital patient care and training for the City and in 1984 was promoted to the office of the Chief of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the City of Virginia Beach, where he served until his retirement in 2016, becoming Chief Emeritus after having served the City for 42 years; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Edwards was appointed to the Virginia Department of Health EMS subcommittee on ALS from 1973 to 1993, creating and refining the Virginia ALS Training Guidelines and the Operational regulations; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Edwards was best known for building EMS and the rescue squads in the City Virginia Beach to department status and positioning the organization to become what it is today; as operations and the call volume grew, he could be seen working a shift as the paramedic more than once each month, in addition to his many other responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Edwards served 12 years as a member of the Governor's EMS Advisory Board, as a member of the EMS Disaster Response Committee, Chair of the State Medevac Committee, and Chair of the EMS Communications Committee; he also served as a member of Tidewater EMS Regional EMS Council Board of Directors from 1976 to 2016 and received the Governor's Award for Excellence in EMS in 2017; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, Bruce Edwards was appointed to the Virginia Board of Health, serving two terms on the board and serving as chair from 2011 to 2017, using his level demeanor and determined personality to address contentious issues that came before the board during his tenure; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Edwards was appointed to the Virginia Volunteer Firefighters and Rescue Squad Workers Service Award Pension Fund, representing VAVRS, and served from 2017 to 2020; and

WHEREAS, shortly after his passing, the City of Virginia Beach City Council renamed the EMS Training Center as The Bruce W. Edwards Virginia Beach Emergency Medical Services Headquarters and Training Center in his honor; and

WHEREAS, according to his son in an interview, Bruce Edwards was the protector of the volunteer EMS system during his time as the organization's leader in the City of Virginia Beach; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Edwards will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his beloved wife, Jean; his son, Donald James Edwards; his son-in-law Michael John Mailand; his five grandchildren, his brothers and sisters-in-law; and numerous nieces and nephews; he was predeceased by his daughter Patricia Marie Edwards Mailand; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Edwards will also be missed, remembered and live on in stories told by his numerous EMS coworkers and friends, including those he served with through more than 42 years, students he taught, patients he treated, and those in the law-enforcement and fire service community, all of whom made up his second family; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Bruce Winston Edwards, a respected leader in the City of Virginia Beach community and in the EMS community in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate of Virginia prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Bruce Winston Edwards as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's

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59 respect for his memory.