

2021 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 226

Celebrating the life of Joshua Thomas Thompson.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 18, 2021

WHEREAS, Joshua Thomas Thompson, a beloved member of the Virginia Beach community whose brave fight against amyotrophic lateral sclerosis inspired many and brought greater awareness to the disease, died on October 29, 2020; and

WHEREAS, affectionately known to family and friends as "JT," Joshua Thompson graduated from First Colonial High School in Virginia Beach and Old Dominion University before working as a marketing director for Gold Key PHR, a leading hospitality management group operating in Virginia Beach and Norfolk; and

WHEREAS, after Joshua Thompson was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) in 2007, he and a group of friends founded the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation to raise money for ALS research and other initiatives; through its annual JT Walk, the organization has raised over \$30 million to date; and

WHEREAS, an avid surfer who wanted to ensure that his local beaches could be enjoyed by all, Joshua Thompson spearheaded the creation of JT's Grommet Island Park, a wheelchair-accessible beach park and playground at First Street in Virginia Beach that was the first of its kind in the area; and

WHEREAS, inspired by his experience surviving a congenital heart defect as an infant, Joshua Thompson and the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation raised funds for the "JT Grombulance," a first-class neonatal ambulance serving the Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters in Norfolk; and

WHEREAS, to support wounded veterans, children with disabilities, and their families, Joshua Thompson, the Virginia Gentlemen Foundation, and JT's Walkers, raised over \$17 million to build JT's Camp Grom, a 70-acre, fully accessible adventure camp in Virginia Beach that features an aquatic center, ropes course, and athletic facilities; and

WHEREAS, Joshua Thompson's courageous fight against ALS, which was chronicled in a 2009 feature story on the front page of *The New York Times*, brought greater attention to the disease and those advocating for access to compassionate use medical treatments; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his many exemplary contributions to the community, Joshua Thompson was named a Triton of Virginia Beach's 37th Neptune Festival royal court in 2010; two years later, the City of Virginia Beach proclaimed October 5, 2012, as Josh Thompson Day to honor Joshua Thompson's many accomplishments and herald the completion of JT's Grommet Island Park; and

WHEREAS, Joshua Thompson will be lovingly remembered and dearly missed by his wife, Joy; his two sons, Wyatt and Jordan; his parents, Kathleen and Bruce; his brother, Christopher; 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 Joshua Thomas Thompson, a treasured member of the Virginia Beach community who touched countless lives through his courage, determination, and unwavering faith; 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 Joshua Thomas Thompson as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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