

2021 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 337

Celebrating the life of John R.F. Lewis.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 2021

WHEREAS, John R.F. Lewis, an esteemed food activist, accomplished farmer, and beloved member of the Roanoke community, died on January 25, 2021; and

WHEREAS, John Lewis grew up in Roanoke and lived in Richmond for 14 years, where he attended Virginia Commonwealth University and founded the nonprofit Renew Richmond to support urban agriculture projects and address the issue of food insecurity in the community; and

WHEREAS, from 2016 to 2019, John Lewis took over as executive director of Apple Ridge Farm, a nonprofit summer camp in Floyd County, following the retirement of its founder, his father, Peter; and

WHEREAS, John Lewis built on the long legacy of Apple Ridge Farm by providing urban, at-risk children in Roanoke with enriching educational and cultural experiences in the great outdoors; and

WHEREAS, under John Lewis's visionary leadership, Apple Ridge Farm expanded its operations to include an urban farming initiative called "The Well," in which vacant lots in northwest Roanoke were utilized to grow food; and

WHEREAS, John Lewis's "The Well" initiative not only created educational opportunities for neighborhood youth to learn how to grow and cook food, but generated a bounty of fresh produce for the community; and

WHEREAS, dedicated to the unity of mind, body, and spirit, John Lewis established Infinite Way Circle, a holistic health initiative formed to instruct others in the ancient arts of Baguazhang, Daoyin, and Qigong; and

WHEREAS, John Lewis's commitment to eliminating food insecurity in his community included recent collaborations with Healthy Roanoke Valley, the United Way of Roanoke Valley, and Feeding Southwest Virginia, as well as myriad food-related projects at Garden Song Eco Café in Roanoke; and

WHEREAS, John Lewis will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his sons, Elijah and Anais; his mother, Harriet; his father and stepmother, Peter and Carla; his former wife and best friend, Precious; 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 John R.F. Lewis, a respected community activist and advocate in Roanoke whose unwavering kindness, generosity, and optimism touched countless lives; 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 John R.F. Lewis as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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