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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 259

Offered February 21, 2022

Celebrating the life of Ulysses Kirksey.

Patron—Bagby

WHEREAS, Ulysses Kirksey, an accomplished musician and longtime music director and conductor of the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, died on August 13, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Ulysses Kirksey initially studied the alto saxophone, but, after developing an interest in classical music in his teenage years, opted to switch to cello to improve his chances of joining a symphony orchestra; and

WHEREAS, a self-motivated learner who was soon practicing suites by Johann Sebastian Bach, Ulysses Kirksey would earn a place with the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra shortly after picking up the cello; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from John Marshall High School in Richmond, Ulysses Kirksey attended the renowned Manhattan School of Music, where he not only developed his abilities as a cellist, but discovered he had a talent for conducting; and

WHEREAS, Ulysses Kirksey was a member of various ensembles early in his career, playing world-famous stages such as Radio City Music Hall, the Apollo Theater, and Carnegie Hall, while touring extensively throughout Europe; and

WHEREAS, returning to the Commonwealth in the late 1970s, Ulysses Kirksey was briefly a member of the Richmond Chamber Players before a call from Dr. F. Nathaniel Gatlin, founder and conductor of the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, led him to join the newly formed orchestra in 1980; and

WHEREAS, Ulysses Kirksey became assistant director of the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra in 1986 and was named director and conductor three years later, a position he would carry out with grace and distinction for the next 33 years; and

WHEREAS, among his many accomplishments with the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, Ulysses Kirksey is credited with improving the orchestra's string section and broadening the range and difficulty of the compositions it performed, all while developing the group into the cherished cultural institution that it is today; and

WHEREAS, a treasured member of both the Richmond and Petersburg communities, Ulysses Kirksey will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by numerous family members, colleagues, and friends; 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 Ulysses Kirksey, beloved conductor and music director of the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra whose kind and generous nature inspired 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 Ulysses Kirksey as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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