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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 55

Offered February 24, 2022

Celebrating the life of Helen Marie Taylor.

Patrons—Freitas, Ware and Williams

WHEREAS, Helen Marie Taylor, an accomplished theater professional, noteworthy historic preservationist and advocate, and beloved member of the Orange County community, died on January 25, 2022; and

WHEREAS, a native of Waco, Texas, Helen Marie Taylor attended Baylor University and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London before serving her country admirably as entertainment director of the Seventh United States Army during and after World War II; and

WHEREAS, following her service, Helen Marie Taylor pursued an acting career in New York, earning a Best Young Actress Award for her exceptional portrayal of Ophelia in Hamlet, and later taught Shakespearean drama at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts; and

WHEREAS, Helen Taylor married her sixth cousin, Jaquelin E. Taylor, in 1964, and devoted herself to restoring Bloomsbury, the ancestral home of the Taylor family, which had served as residence to the maternal grandparents of two presidents, James Madison and Zachary Taylor; and

WHEREAS, Helen Taylor lived on Monument Avenue in Richmond for more than 40 years and in 1968 was single-handedly responsible for saving the historic street's original asphalt blocks as she stood down pavers with the city that were preparing to resurface the road; and

WHEREAS, Helen Marie Taylor was appointed by President Ronald W. Reagan to serve as the United States delegate to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization meeting in Paris in 1983 and as a United States representative to the United Nations in 1986; and

WHEREAS, Helen Marie Taylor was a passionate patron of the arts who founded and supported several notable theater companies, including the American Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, Connecticut, Theatre Louisville, the Dallas Theatre Center, and the Association of Producing Artists in New York; and

WHEREAS, Helen Marie Taylor's leadership in the arts community included service on the board of governors of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London for more than a half-century and as chair of the American Auditions Committee; and

WHEREAS, Helen Marie Taylor has given generously of her time and expertise to many local civic organizations, serving as a council member for the National Endowment for the Humanities, as president of the James Monroe Memorial Foundation for nearly 25 years, as founder and president of the James Madison Museum, and as a member of the Dolley Madison Garden Club; and

WHEREAS, a recognized leader and advocate of historic preservation and restoration efforts in the Commonwealth, Helen Taylor opened The Helen Marie Taylor Museum of Waco, Texas, to educate visitors on the history of her hometown; and

WHEREAS, Helen Marie Taylor has received many awards and accolades as a testament to her contributions to the community, including the 1993 Gold Medal for Good Citizenship by the Sons of the American Revolution and the inaugural Friends of Montpelier Lifetime Membership award from the Montpelier Foundation; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by her first husband, George; second husband, Jaquelin; and her sons, Jaquelin and Ralph, Helen Marie Taylor will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by her sons, Howell and George; her grandson, Zachary; 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 Helen Marie Taylor, a cherished member of the Orange County community whose dedication to the arts, local history, and the founding principles of our country 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 Helen Marie Taylor as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

HR55