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## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 799

Offered September 6, 2022

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr.*

Patrons—O'Quinn, Wampler, Adams, L.R., Austin, Avoli, Ballard, Bell, Bloxom, Brewer, Bulova, Byron, Campbell, J.L., Carr, Cherry, Delaney, Edmunds, Fariss, Filler-Corn, Fowler, Freitas, Gilbert, Glass, Hayes, Head, Herring, Hodges, Hudson, Jenkins, Kilgore, Knight, Kory, Lopez, Marshall, McGuire, Morefield, Orrock, Plum, Ransone, Reid, Runion, Scott, D.L., Sickles, Simonds, Sullivan, Tran, Ward, Ware, Watts, Webert, Wiley, Wilt and Wyatt

WHEREAS, the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., a highly admired former member of the Virginia House of Delegates who represented the residents of Southwest Virginia for nearly three decades, died on August 4, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Joseph "Joe" Pickett Johnson, Jr., grew up in Hayter's Gap and served his country as a member of the United States Air Force during the Korean War; he also participated in Operation Castle, a series of high-yield nuclear tests at Bikini Atoll in the 1950s; and

WHEREAS, after his honorable military service, Joe Johnson graduated from Emory & Henry College; he earned a law degree from the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond, then embarked on a 60-year career as an attorney; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his law practice in Abingdon, Joe Johnson served as a substitute judge of the 28th Judicial District of Virginia and was president of the Washington County Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service to his community and the Commonwealth, Joe Johnson ran for and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1965 and 1967 but did not seek reelection after his second term due to the long drive from Abingdon to Richmond before the completion of Interstate 81; and

WHEREAS, after a hiatus of nearly 20 years, Joe Johnson returned to the Virginia House of Delegates and served from 1990 to 2014; during his tenure as a state legislator, he introduced or supported many important pieces of legislation and offered his expertise to several standing committees, subcommittees, and study commissions; and

WHEREAS, Joe Johnson took a particular interest in issues related to education and played a key role in the establishment of the Commonwealth's community college system, as well as the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission; and

WHEREAS, Joe Johnson volunteered his time and leadership to the Washington Red Cross, the Emory & Henry College Board of Trustees, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Board of Trustees, and many other boards, commissions, and service organizations; he was a member of the Order of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Kazim Shriners, Order of the Eastern Star, and Independent Order of Odd Fellows; and

WHEREAS, Joe Johnson honored his fellow veterans as a former post commander of American Legion Post No. 12 in Abingdon and a trustee and former chair of the Virginia War Memorial Foundation Board; he also continued to serve the Commonwealth as a member of the Civil Air Patrol; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Joe Johnson was well known for his kindness and unparalleled ability to establish a rapport with nearly everyone he met; he was a respected consensus builder who strove to create trust and mutual respect in the General Assembly while striving for common ground solutions to benefit all Virginians; and

WHEREAS, for 45 years, Joe Johnson enjoyed fellowship and worship with the congregation of Abingdon Baptist Church, where he served as a Sunday school teacher and a member of the deacon council; and

WHEREAS, Joe Johnson's greatest joy in life was his beloved family; he relished opportunities to cheer for his children and grandchildren at youth sporting events and strove to impart wise life lessons while supporting them in all their endeavors; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his wife of 64 years, Ann, Joe Johnson will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his children, Mary Jo, Joseph III, and Sage, and their families, and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., a dedicated public servant in Southwest Virginia; 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 the Honorable Joseph Pickett Johnson, Jr., as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

HR799