

2023 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 614

Offered February 2, 2023

Celebrating the life of Thomas Lewis Darden, Sr.

Patron—Brewer

WHEREAS, Thomas Lewis Darden, Sr., a highly admired farmer, successful small business owner, and active member of the Isle of Wight community, died on September 5, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Thomas "Tommy" Lewis Darden, Sr., was a lifelong resident of Isle of Wight County where he graduated from Smithfield High School, lettering in three sports; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Darden worked as a farmer for more than 50 years, and local schoolchildren traveled by the busload to his farm each fall to learn about local farming; his 400-acre family farm just south of Smithfield boasted peanuts, soybeans, corn, beef, cotton, and ham; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Darden was also the owner of Darden's Country Store, a beloved local landmark and community meeting place, which was founded by his father in 1952; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Darden was well known for his outstanding customer service and commitment to providing high quality products, with customers traveling from far and wide to purchase his exceptional cured and smoked country hams; his family has cured ham for over 70 years, appearing in *The New York Times* in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Darden was active in several community organizations; he served on the board of directors at Isle of Wight Academy, was past chairman of the County Committee for the Farm Service Agency, was a charter member and past president of Darden's Store Hunt Club, and was a member and past president of the Virginia Peanut Grower's Association; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Darden brought joy to others through his positivity, sense of humor, and generosity; he never failed to help a friend or neighbor in need and relished every opportunity to brighten someone's day; and

WHEREAS, Tommy Darden will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, DeeDee; his children, Ellen, Thomas, Jr., and Carrie, and their families; and numerous other family members 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 Thomas Lewis Darden, Sr.; 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 Thomas Lewis Darden, Sr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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