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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 739

Offered February 17, 2023

Celebrating the life of Master Sergeant Jan Willem Wierenga, USA, Ret.

Patrons—Batten; Senator: Cosgrove

WHEREAS, Master Sergeant Jan Willem Wierenga, USA, Ret., of Williamsburg, a distinguished veteran who served with the elite Green Berets and former member of the Central Intelligence Agency who served the United States with the utmost dedication, died on January 9, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Jan Willem "Dutch" Wierenga was raised in the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, and was the child of a Dutch planter; after the Japanese invaded during World War II, he and his family were sent to an internment camp and later imprisoned by the local government during the Indonesian National Revolution; and

WHEREAS, Dutch Wierenga ultimately escaped captivity and gained combat experience in the jungles of Indonesia in the early 1950s, then immigrated to the Netherlands, where he joined the military in 1955; and

WHEREAS, in 1960, Dutch Wierenga fulfilled a longtime dream to move to the United States, then became a naturalized citizen and volunteered to join the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, over the course of three tours of duty in the Vietnam War, Dutch Wierenga served with the 101st Airborne Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the 5th Special Forces Group before joining the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam - Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG); and

WHEREAS, as a member of MACV-SOG, a highly classified special operations and intelligence unit, Dutch Wierenga participated in some of the most daring and dangerous missions of the war, often far behind enemy lines with little support; and

WHEREAS, Dutch Wierenga also served as a special forces instructor and a high-altitude, low-opening parachute instructor, and he was the senior noncommissioned officer at the founding of the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape training program; and

WHEREAS, for his meritorious service, Dutch Wierenga earned the Silver Star, four Bronze Stars, and at least two Purple Hearts; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Dutch Wierenga retired from the United States Army and began a 36-year career with the Central Intelligence Agency as a paramilitary operations officer and a contract training officer; he officially retired at the age of 85 in the spring of 2022 after six decades of service to the nation; and

WHEREAS, Dutch Wierenga was highly admired by his fellow Williamsburg residents for his kindness, generosity, humility, and grace; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his first wife, Cathy, Dutch Wierenga will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Kathy; his daughter, Dina, and her family; and numerous other family members, friends, and fellow veterans; 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 Master Sergeant Jan Willem Wierenga, USA, Ret., a decorated veteran and respected member of the Williamsburg community; 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 Master Sergeant Jan Willem Wierenga, USA, Ret., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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