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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 140

Offered February 16, 2023

Celebrating the life of Edward Leroy Beard.

Patrons—Cosgrove, Spruill, DeSteph and Norment

WHEREAS, Edward Leroy Beard, an honorable veteran, accomplished athlete, and beloved member of the Chesapeake community, whose success in the National Football League made him a local sports legend, died on January 15, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Edward "Ed" Beard attended Oscar F. Smith High School in what was then South Norfolk in the late 1950s, where he was a standout on the football team and a state champion heavyweight wrestler despite his school not having a wrestling program; and

WHEREAS, Ed Beard went on to attend Staunton Military Academy and then played football for two years at the University of Tennessee before joining the semi-professional football team the Wheeling Ironmen; and

WHEREAS, Ed Beard was drafted into the United States Army, serving his country with honor and distinction and earning recognition as the Most Outstanding Player on the United States Army football team; and

WHEREAS, Ed Beard was drafted by the San Francisco 49ers of the National Football League (NFL) in 1964 and went on to play eight seasons from 1965 to 1972 as a middle linebacker and on special teams, starting in 53 games and helping the team to National Football Conference - Western Division titles in 1970, 1971, and 1972; and

WHEREAS, Ed Beard, affectionately known by his teammates as "Biggie" for his ability to play bigger than his size, was notably the first special teams captain in the history of the NFL; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his exceptional play and the respect he inspired among his fellow teammates, Ed Beard was presented the Len Eshmont Award in 1971 by the San Francisco 49ers; and

WHEREAS, after suffering a career-ending injury in a playoff game against the Dallas Cowboys, Ed Beard found a calling in coaching, serving for over a decade as a coach in the NFL with the San Francisco 49ers, the New Orleans Saints, and the Detroit Lions; and

WHEREAS, after his career in football, Ed Beard went into the construction business, starting Ed Beard Home Improvements, and he also worked for some time with the Chesapeake Sheriff's Office and as a bondsman in Chesapeake; and

WHEREAS, Ed Beard's football legacy was enshrined with his induction into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 2002 and with Oscar F. Smith High School's football field, Beard-DeLong-Easley Field, being named in his honor; and

WHEREAS, Ed Beard was a well-known lover of country western music and a talented singer and musician; he joined the famed Virginia Rounders with his wife, Bobbie, who was the daughter of one of the group's founders, Willie Phelps, and performed with the group at various local events over many years; and

WHEREAS, Ed Beard will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his loving wife of 55 years, Bobbie; his daughter, Ashley, and her family; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Edward Leroy Beard, a cherished member of the Chesapeake community whose success in the National Football League brings great pride to the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Edward Leroy Beard as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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