

1999 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 446

On the death of Watkins M. Abbitt.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 28, 1999
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 5, 1999

WHEREAS, Watkins M. Abbitt, former United States Congressman from Virginia and a public figure of rare stature for more than 50 years, died on July 13, 1998; and

WHEREAS, a native of Appomattox County and a graduate of Appomattox Agricultural High School, Watt Abbitt earned his law degree at the University of Richmond and in 1965 was honored by the same with a Doctor of Laws; and

WHEREAS, Watt Abbitt served as a Democratic elector for the Fourth District in 1944 and was a member of the 1945 Virginia Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS, Watt Abbitt served for 16 years as Commonwealth's Attorney for Appomattox County and was a founding member and past president of the Virginia Commonwealth's Attorneys Association; and

WHEREAS, in 1948 in a special election to fill the Fourth Congressional District seat vacated by the death of Patrick Drewery, Watt Abbitt was elected to Congress, where he served with great distinction for the next 24 years; and

WHEREAS, upon his retirement, Watt Abbitt returned to Appomattox County and the practice of law, and his influence on Virginia politics remained strong; and

WHEREAS, a longtime leader in the Democratic Party, including an eight-year term as party chairman, Watt Abbitt played a role in the election of almost all of the Commonwealth's governors, Democrat and Republican alike, for more than four decades; and

WHEREAS, Watt Abbitt served the practice of law through his leadership in the Virginia State Bar, the Virginia Bar Association, and the Virginia Trial Lawyers Association; and

WHEREAS, for 67 years, Watt Abbitt served the citizens of his community, as deacon and treasurer of the Liberty Baptist Church, chairman of the board of Farmers Bank, legal advisor to the Appomattox Rescue Squad since its inception, and dedicated member of the Appomattox Moose Lodge, Elks Club, Woodman of the World, and Lions Club; and

WHEREAS, Watt Abbitt, throughout his distinguished career of public service, was respected for his uncommon integrity, dedication, and long and meritorious service to the people of Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby mourn the loss of a true Virginia Gentleman, one of the more accomplished, influential, and admired Virginians of this century, Watkins M. Abbitt; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Watkins M. Abbitt as an expression of the great esteem in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly and the citizens of the Commonwealth.

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