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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 291

Offered March 6, 2006

*Recognizing the exceptional service and career of Captain William Clark.*

Patrons—Watkins and Blevins

WHEREAS, William Clark was born in 1770 in Virginia near Charlottesville, where he first learned the skills of a frontiersman, an explorer, and a leader that would characterize his life; and

WHEREAS, William Clark eagerly accepted the invitation of his friend Meriwether Lewis to captain the Corps of Discovery that President Thomas Jefferson commissioned to find a route across unknown territories to the Pacific, to observe and record the culture of the Native Americans, and to collect and catalogue plant and animal life on the journey; and

WHEREAS, William Clark's journals, maps, and sketches were invaluable in recording the remarkable, almost three-year trek of the Corps on a journey of 8,000 miles through often daunting terrain; and

WHEREAS, William Clark's steady demeanor and diplomatic skills proved invaluable throughout the journey; and

WHEREAS, William Clark was promised a captain's commission and, in all aspects of leadership, responsibility, and pay, was always considered to be the co-captain of the Corps with Meriwether Lewis but was denied the rank of captain by the War Department and instead was given a commission as lieutenant; and

WHEREAS, on January 17, 2001, President William J. Clinton presented to Payton Clark and John Clark, direct descendants of William Clark, a posthumous captain's commission for William Clark in recognition of his status as co-leader of the Corps, his contributions to the opening of the West, and his distinguished career of public service after the expedition; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly recognize the exceptional courage, service, and career of Captain William Clark and the importance of the Lewis and Clark expedition and the adventures of the Corps of Discovery, which reflect the best spirit of the frontier and the quest for a better appreciation and understanding of this vast country; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Virginia Department of Education for the information of the Commonwealth's history and civics teachers and to Payton Clark and John Clark, representatives of the descendants of Captain William Clark, to reflect the great admiration and esteem of the General Assembly of Virginia for this renowned Virginian and its profound regret for the lamentable delay in awarding Captain William Clark the rightful rank he so richly deserved.

INTRODUCED

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