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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 824

Offered January 29, 2009

Celebrating the life of John Ashley Blackburn.

Patrons—Toscano, Bell, Fralin, Howell, W.J., Ingram, Massie, Poisson, and Saxman

WHEREAS, John Ashley Blackburn, Dean of Admission at the University of Virginia since 1985, who helped pave the way for thousands of minority and lower income students to obtain a quality education and a better life, died on January 20, 2009; and

WHEREAS, John Ashley "Jack" Blackburn was born on November 29, 1941, in Colora, Maryland, the son of Stephen John and Ruth Johnson Blackburn; and

WHEREAS, Jack Blackburn graduated from Western Maryland College with a sociology degree and an ROTC commission as a second lieutenant in 1963; served his country in the United States Army on the family notification detail at Fort Dix, New Jersey, during the Vietnam War; and earned a master's degree in student personnel management from Indiana University in 1968; and

WHEREAS, Jack Blackburn began his career as the director of admissions at Mary Baldwin College in 1968; he became an associate dean of admission at the University of Virginia (UVA) in 1979 and was appointed dean of admission in 1985; and

WHEREAS, Dean Blackburn believed in a holistic admissions philosophy that views each potential student as a multifaceted individual with unique talents and qualities, and he considered how that student might contribute to the value of the entire student body and the UVA experience; and

WHEREAS, to make the University of Virginia the best it could be, Dean Blackburn demonstrated a commitment to diversity that was unwavering by pursuing enrollment of African-American students, who continue to graduate at a level unmatched by any major university, as well as lower income students, who have benefited from unequalled education opportunities through increased financial assistance; and

WHEREAS, Dean Blackburn created an outreach office to encourage African-American students to apply and accept offers of admission, pushed for increased financial aid for all students, supported abolishment of the university's early-decision admission process, and was instrumental in creating the AccessUVA program that provides scholarships to students from lower income families; and

WHEREAS, Dean Blackburn served as a national leader on all the major issues in admission, including college ranking methodology, standardized testing, and the dissemination of the International Baccalaureate Program through high schools throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Dean Blackburn was a global representative for the United States educational system through trips around the world sponsored by the State Department; and

WHEREAS, Dean Blackburn maintained his sense of justice, honor, and humor through even the most difficult of times and embodied the virtues that Jefferson hoped would represent his university; and he was a recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Award in 2008, which is the highest honor bestowed upon a member of the university community; and

WHEREAS, Jack Blackburn was an elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville; and

WHEREAS, Dean Blackburn will be fondly remembered for his integrity and his extraordinary generosity and will be greatly missed by his wife of 45 years, Betty Blackburn; his daughter, Heidi Blackburn Helmers, and his son, John Ashley Blackburn, Jr.; his four beloved grandchildren; and numerous other loving family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly note with great sadness the passing of a revered member of the University of Virginia family and an outstanding Virginian, John Ashley Blackburn; 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 John Ashley Blackburn as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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