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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 298

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled January 5, 2009

Celebrating the life of Benjamin H. Bolen.

Patrons—Reynolds; Delegates: Armstrong, Carrico and Merricks

WHEREAS, Benjamin H. Bolen of Martinsville, a respected citizen, longtime public servant, and former director of the Virginia Division of State Parks, died on October 24, 2008; and

WHEREAS, a native of Fancy Gap, Benjamin "Ben" Bolen was born on September 16, 1917, the son of Myrtle Snow and Marcus M. Bolen; graduated from Hillsville High School; and served his country in the United States Army and the United States Merchant Marine during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Ben Bolen attended Emory and Henry College and later Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, earning a bachelor's degree in engineering; and

WHEREAS, Ben Bolen began his distinguished career in public service working from 1936 to 1950 for the Virginia Department of Highways, where he was the assistant resident engineer for Henry County; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, Ben Bolen joined the Virginia Division of State Parks, serving as the superintendent of Claytor Lake State Park until 1959, as assistant director of state parks from 1959 to 1961, and as the exemplary director of state parks from 1961 until his retirement in 1982; and

WHEREAS, under Ben Bolen's vision and able leadership, the number of state parks jumped from 15 to 37, attendance rose from 971,000 to 3.16 million annual visits, management practices improved, programs expanded, and funding for park projects and maintenance increased; and

WHEREAS, Ben Bolen generously gave his time and considerable expertise to numerous professional and civic organizations over the years, serving as an active member and master of the Hillsville Masonic Lodge No. 193 A.F. & A.M.; a life member and trustee of the National Recreation and Park Association; a member and president of the National Society for Park Resources, Southeastern Association of State Park Directors, and National Association of State Park Directors; chairman of the Breaks Interstate Park Commission; and a member of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail Advisory Council; and

WHEREAS, Ben Bolen was a faithful member of the First Baptist Church of Martinsville, where he was a deacon, a Sunday School teacher, and was active in the church's many missions in the community; and

WHEREAS, Ben Bolen maintained close ties with his family roots in the Blue Ridge Mountains and Carroll County, and he was a lifelong supporter of local musicians, who included his son Marc, and the famous Galax Fiddler's Convention; he enjoyed all outdoor activities with "great gusto and enthusiasm," whether he was hunting, walking the Appalachian Trail, or playing a round of golf; and

WHEREAS, Ben Bolen will be fondly remembered for his devotion to his family and the Commonwealth and greatly missed by his wife, Edith Cahill Bolen of 53 years, and his son, Marcus William Bolen; his numerous family members and friends; and the citizens of Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly mourn the passing of an outstanding public servant and fine Virginian, Benjamin H. Bolen; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Benjamin H. Bolen as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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