

2011 SESSION

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 445

Offered February 8, 2011

*Celebrating the life of Henry Theodore Northcott Graves.*

Patrons—Obenshain and Vogel

WHEREAS, Henry Theodore Northcott Graves, the admired chairman of the board of Luray Caverns Corporation whose efforts helped attract thousands of tourists to the Shenandoah Valley, died on July 8, 2010; and

WHEREAS, a native of Maryland, Henry "Ted" Graves graduated from Luray High School and attended the University of Miami before his studies were interrupted by World War II; and

WHEREAS, Ted Graves proudly served his country in the United States Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1945 before completing his studies and receiving his bachelor's degree at the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1950s, Ted Graves became actively involved in the business operations of Luray Caverns, which his grandfather had purchased in 1905; he became president of the company in 1952, a position he held until 2008; and

WHEREAS, under the visionary leadership of Ted Graves, Luray Caverns became one of the most visited caverns in the eastern United States, with more than half a million visitors per year; and

WHEREAS, Ted Graves recognized that the greater availability of the automobile after World War II would lead to people traveling farther from home, creating an excellent opportunity for Luray Caverns to attract visitors and to serve as an educational tool to learn about caverns; and

WHEREAS, Ted Graves opened his collection of vintage and historic automobiles to the public in 1957 as the Car and Carriage Caravan and expanded the complex over the next several decades to include a restaurant, two motels, a golf course, and the recently completed Luray Valley Museum and Gardens; and

WHEREAS, Ted Graves also donated land for the construction of the Luray Caverns Airport and operated the airport since it opened in the 1970s; and

WHEREAS, Ted Graves was a strong proponent of tourism in the Shenandoah Valley and across the state; he served as past president of the Virginia Travel Council, the National Caves Association, and the Southern Highlands Attractions; he also served on the board of the Shenandoah Valley Travel Association; and

WHEREAS, several Virginia governors appointed Ted Graves chair of both the Virginia Board of Conservation and Economic Development and the Advisory Committee on Outdoor Advertising; and

WHEREAS, a vocal advocate for the caverns as not only a tourist attraction but also as an educational tool, Ted Graves was also appointed to serve on the Virginia Cave Commission; and

WHEREAS, Ted Graves generously gave of his time and talents in the local community to various organizations, including as president of the Luray Rotary Club, as a member of the Christ Episcopal Church in Luray, as a member of the board of directors at Page Valley Bank, and as a member of the Page County School Board; and

WHEREAS, Ted Graves received numerous awards and accolades throughout his career, including the coveted Shenandoah Bowl, presented by Byrd Newspapers for outstanding service to the travel industry of the Shenandoah Valley; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his son, Harry, Ted Graves will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 66 years, Rebecca; his six surviving children and their families; and his numerous other family members, friends, and admirers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of an outstanding businessman and community supporter, Henry Theodore Northcott Graves; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Henry Theodore Northcott Graves as an expression of the General Assembly's abiding respect for his memory.

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