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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 482

Offered February 14, 2011

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable James Bernard Wilkinson.*

Patrons—Martin, Barker, Blevins, Colgan, Deeds, Edwards, Hanger, Herring, Houck, Howell, Locke, Marsden, Marsh, McDougle, McEachin, McWaters, Miller, J.C., Miller, Y.B., Newman, Norment, Northam, Obenshain, Petersen, Puckett, Puller, Quayle, Reynolds, Ruff, Saslaw, Smith, Stanley, Stosch, Stuart, Ticer, Vogel, Wagner, Wampler, Watkins and Whipple

WHEREAS, the Honorable James Bernard Wilkinson, an esteemed jurist who served the citizens of Richmond with great fairness for 31 years as a judge for the Richmond Circuit Court, died on January 26, 2011; and

WHEREAS, a longtime Richmond resident, James Wilkinson grew up on the North Side and graduated from John Marshall High School, where he was the captain of the "C" Company in the cadet corps; and

WHEREAS, as a young man, James Wilkinson answered the call to duty, along with countless other young men of his generation, and served as a member of the United States Marine Corps during World War II; he continued his military association after the war as a member of the United States Marine Corps Reserves, eventually retiring as a major; and

WHEREAS, after his distinguished military service, James Wilkinson attended the T.C. Williams School of Law at the University of Richmond, as law school at that time did not require an undergraduate degree; and

WHEREAS, a respected attorney, James Wilkinson served as the Commonwealth's Attorney for Richmond from 1966-1969 before his appointment to the Richmond Circuit Court; and

WHEREAS, one of the Commonwealth's longest-serving judges, Judge Wilkinson presided over the circuit court in South Richmond with a strong sense of fairness, a no-nonsense manner and a keen grasp of and love for the law and the people it served; and

WHEREAS, Judge Wilkinson possessed traditional values and an understanding of the modern forces at work in society, making him a formidable force at the bench and a beloved figure to those who had the honor of working with him; and

WHEREAS, Judge Wilkinson played a pivotal role in ensuring legal representation to indigent defendants, increased the level of professionalism and decorum in the courtroom, and was one of the first judges in the country to consider DNA evidence in murder convictions; and

WHEREAS, actively involved in fraternal and civic affairs locally and throughout the state, Judge Wilkinson was among the nation's highest ranking Masons and was past Grand Master of Masons in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Judge Wilkinson was a 50-year member of Northminster Baptist Church, where he enjoyed worship and fellowship and served his fellow members as a Sunday School teacher and deacon; and

WHEREAS, a man of great integrity and compassionate heart, Judge Wilkinson leaves behind a sterling legacy of service to the community, Commonwealth, and country that others may strive to emulate; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his grandson Paul, James Wilkinson will be greatly missed by his wife, Barbara; children, Kathleen, Christine, and James, and their families, including grandson James; 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 admired jurist and respected citizen of the Commonwealth, James Bernard Wilkinson; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Judge James Bernard Wilkinson as an expression of the abiding respect in which his memory is held by the members of the General Assembly.

INTRODUCED

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