

2012 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 407

Offered February 17, 2012

Celebrating the life of David J. Prior.

Patrons—Kilgore, Johnson and Morefield; Senators: Carrico and Puckett

WHEREAS, David J. Prior, the visionary chancellor of The University of Virginia's College at Wise who oversaw unprecedented growth and development at the institution, died on February 2, 2012; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Olivet College, David Prior earned a master's degree from Central Michigan University and a doctorate from the University of Virginia; he was also a postdoctoral fellow at Princeton University; and

WHEREAS, David Prior enjoyed a successful teaching and research career at the University of Kentucky and entered administration as the chair of the Department of Biology at Northern Arizona University; and

WHEREAS, David Prior gained a wealth of experience as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Northern Arizona University, dean of the graduate school at Northern Michigan University, and provost in the University of Wisconsin system; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 David Prior joined The University of Virginia's College at Wise, quickly developing a deep appreciation for the Southwest Virginia region of which it is a part and a vision of the expanded impact the institution could have in the lives of students and on the area; and

WHEREAS, David Prior devoted many hours to listening to the concerns of students and annually traded places with a student for a day, attending classes, taking notes, and gaining firsthand insight into a student's experience at The University of Virginia's College at Wise; and

WHEREAS, David Prior taught freshman biology classes and had recently begun teaching a neurobiology special topics course and opened a research laboratory in the Leonard W. Sandridge Science Center to work with students; and

WHEREAS, an avid supporter of the college's athletic teams, David Prior and his wife, Merry Lu, were a familiar presence at games, cheering on students from the stands; and

WHEREAS, during David Prior's tenure, The University of Virginia's College at Wise celebrated the successful completion of its "Fulfilling the Dream" campaign, which raised over \$50 million for the creation of 77 new student scholarship funds and the support of academic programs, athletics, student-life enhancement, and other programs; and

WHEREAS, David Prior oversaw the expansion of academic programs and the creation of software engineering, computer science, management information systems, biochemistry, and music majors and worked to encourage more students to enter science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields; and

WHEREAS, David Prior took great pride in the construction of the Hunter J. Smith Dining Commons, the Gilliam Center for the Arts, two residence halls, and the Convocation Center and the renovation of the Leonard W. Sandridge Science Center; and

WHEREAS, David Prior brought the globally recognized Darden Executive Education program to The University of Virginia's College at Wise and worked with Mountain Empire Community College to create the Appalachian Inter-Mountain Scholars Program for community college transfer students; and

WHEREAS, David Prior forged strong relationships with community and corporate leaders, establishing the Southwest Virginia Technology Development Center and the Healthy Appalachia Institute; and

WHEREAS, throughout his tenure, David Prior's motto was student success and service to the region; his notable and lasting contributions to The University of Virginia's College at Wise will continue to be of benefit to students and the region for years to come; and

WHEREAS, David Prior will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Merry Lu; children, Andrea and Christopher, and their families; numerous other family members and friends; faculty, staff, students, and administrators at The University of Virginia's College of Wise; and colleagues from across the Commonwealth and nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of one of the Commonwealth's great educational leaders, David J. Prior; 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 David J. Prior as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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