

2013 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 640

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 8, 2013

Commending Walter L. Mess.

Patron—Scott, J.M.

WHEREAS, Walter L. Mess, an enthusiastic public servant and a faithful contributor to his community, will celebrate his 100th birthday in 2013; and

WHEREAS, Walter Mess began a lifetime of service as a first lieutenant in a World War II special operations group, the Office of Strategic Services, conducting daring missions to disrupt the enemy; and

WHEREAS, after the war, Walter Mess finished law school, traveled to San Diego as a member of the Quartermaster Corps, and returned to become an essential member of the City of Falls Church; and

WHEREAS, Walter Mess worked as a volunteer for many organizations in the City of Falls Church, including the library and the electoral board, and became the chair of the local chamber of commerce in 1958; and

WHEREAS, inspired by the parks he found in San Diego, Walter Mess set about trying to replicate that same beauty by laying the groundwork for a similar park system in Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1959 Walter Mess began to realize his dream when, after founding Falls Church Community Parks Incorporated, he became one of the founding members of the Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority (NVRPA); and

WHEREAS, in the early years of the agency, Walter Mess was active in both the office and the field, personally hiking each new property the NVRPA considered purchasing; and

WHEREAS, Walter Mess became the second chair of the NVRPA, serving for more than 25 years and making considerable contributions to preservation efforts throughout Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of Walter Mess lies in the 10,000 acres of park land he helped to acquire and preserve for the benefit of residents and visitors and the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail that he helped design; and

WHEREAS, on the occasion of his retirement, Walter Mess was named the chairman emeritus of the NVRPA, and the National Recreation and Park Association recognized him with the 2004 National Voluntary Service Award; and

WHEREAS, in 2004 the City of Falls Church proclaimed December 20 to be Walter Mess Day in honor of his long and outstanding service to the City of Falls Church; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 prior to the Walter L. Mess five-kilometer charity run, an outdoor plaza on the W&OD Trail was dedicated to honor Walter Mess; and

WHEREAS, Walter Mess is a model for the community, displaying unparalleled wisdom, a commitment to public service, and a genuine love for the City of Falls Church and Northern Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Walter L. Mess on the occasion of his 100th birthday; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Walter L. Mess as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his loyal public service and dedication to the community of the City of Falls Church.

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