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**HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 89**

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled December 20, 2012

*Celebrating the life of Merle Martin Warren Dickert.*

Patrons—O'Quinn, Johnson, and Kilgore

WHEREAS, Merle Martin Warren Dickert, the dynamic executive director of the Paramount Center for the Arts in Bristol who made many contributions to the civic and cultural life of the Tri-Cities area, died on July 28, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the daughter of Merle Musser Watkins and state Senator George M. Warren, Jr., and a native of Bristol, Merle Dickert graduated from Virginia High School and earned an undergraduate degree from Virginia Commonwealth University; and

WHEREAS, in 1980 Merle Dickert married a fellow Bristol native, Robert Dickert, and the young couple eventually resettled in their hometown after he completed law school; and

WHEREAS, a talented and creative woman, Merle Dickert worked as an illustrator and artist and immersed herself in family and community affairs before joining the Paramount Center for the Arts as its marketing director; and

WHEREAS, passionate about the importance of the arts, Merle Dickert provided strong direction and tremendous energy as she oversaw efforts to promote Paramount Center for the Arts offerings to the community; and

WHEREAS, Merle Dickert then served as the director of Alumni Development and Special Events at Virginia Intermont College, bringing a wealth of proven special event, marketing, and leadership experience; and

WHEREAS, in 2007 Merle Dickert rejoined the Paramount Center for the Arts as its executive director and worked to provide a solid financial base for the organization while overseeing the historic building's care and upkeep; and

WHEREAS, a visionary advocate for the arts, Merle Dickert was involved with Theatre Bristol, William King Museum, Birthplace of Country Music Alliance, Bristol Ballet, and Bristol Friends of Barter and exhibited her own work at the Virginia Highlands Festival and the Vaten School of Crafts; and

WHEREAS, Merle Dickert gave her time and talents to the Bristol YMCA and YWCA, the executive committee of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Junior League, and Daughters of the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS, the recipient of numerous awards and accolades, Merle Dickert received the Paul Harris Fellow from Rotary International, the Tribute to Women Award from the Bristol YWCA, the Volunteer of the Year and Sue Shawl Memorial Award from the Junior League of Bristol, and the Virginia Governor's Award for the Arts; and

WHEREAS, a gracious and vibrant woman, Merle Dickert will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her husband, Robert; children, George, Robert, and John, and their families; her mother, Merle; and numerous other family members, friends, and admirers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of a respected citizen and enthusiastic promoter of the arts in Bristol and Southwest Virginia, Merle Martin Warren Dickert; 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 Merle Martin Warren Dickert as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for her memory.

INTRODUCED

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