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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 313

Offered January 9, 2013

Prefiled January 8, 2013

Commending Earl Hamner, Jr.

Patrons—Watkins; Delegate: Peace

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner, Jr., a Virginia treasure, is commended for his many contributions to the cultural landscape of the Commonwealth and nation through his many literary accomplishments in radio, television, film, and print; and

WHEREAS, one of eight children, Earl Hamner grew up in the small community of Schuyler in Nelson County, nestled in the scenic foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains and not far from where his famous ancestor, Italian immigrant Anthony Giannini, once helped Thomas Jefferson with the vineyard at Monticello; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner showed a natural inclination toward and talent for the written word at a young age, penning the poem "My Dog," which was published in the children's section of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, when he was just six years of age; and

WHEREAS, as the nation descended into the Great Depression, Earl Hamner's family experienced hardships, but enjoyed their times together, relying on one another and their friends and neighbors; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner's upbringing and experiences during those times amidst his family and the natural beauty of the Blue Ridge mountains would etch themselves into his heart and mind, providing a wealth of material for and profoundly influencing his work throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, a gifted writer, Earl Hamner earned a scholarship to the University of Richmond, where his studies were interrupted when he was drafted into the United States Army during World War II; he continued to write while serving and began to submit stories for publication; and

WHEREAS, after his discharge, Earl Hamner completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Cincinnati before moving to New York City, where he wrote radio scripts for NBC while also working on his first book, *Fifty Roads to Town*, which was published in 1953; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, *Spencer's Mountain*, the heart-warming portrayal of a family living through the Great Depression near the Blue Ridge mountains, based on Earl Hamner's family, was published, and, in 1970, *The Homecoming*, the story of a father's return to his family on Christmas Eve, was published; and

WHEREAS, the novella became a popular CBS Christmas special and led to the Emmy-award winning television series, *The Waltons*, which captivated audiences with its focus on simple living and the strength of family and introduced the memorable phrase "Goodnight John Boy"; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner reached back to his family's Italian winemaking roots for inspiration when he created the prime time soap opera, *Falcon Crest*, based in the vineyards of California and focused on the rivalries among family members involved in the wine industry; and

WHEREAS, among his many creative endeavors, Earl Hamner wrote episodes for Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*; produced an Australian series, *The Man From Snowy River*; and coauthored the book, *Odette: A Goose of Toulouse*; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his illustrious career, Earl Hamner was awarded a Television-Radio Writers Award, George Foster Peabody Award for Distinguished Journalism, Virginian of the Year Award from the Virginia Press Association, and Emmy Award for Outstanding Drama Series for *The Waltons*; and

WHEREAS, Earl Hamner also received the Man of the Year Award from the National Association of Television Program Executives, Virginia Association of Broadcasters Award, and Frederic Ziv Award for Outstanding Achievement in Telecommunications from the University of Cincinnati; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Earl Hamner returned to Virginia to receive the prestigious Literary Lifetime Achievement Award from the Library of Virginia for his long-lasting and lifelong contributions to literature; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend a native son, Earl Hamner, Jr., on his lifetime of extraordinary literary accomplishment; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Earl Hamner, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his immense talent and remarkable achievements.