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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 33

Offered January 28, 2013

Celebrating the life of Rear Admiral DeWitt Leroy Freeman, USN (Ret.).

Patron—Garrett

WHEREAS, Rear Admiral DeWitt Leroy Freeman, USN (Ret.), a distinguished veteran who was the driving force in the development of the Louisa County Airport, died on November 7, 2012; and

WHEREAS, in 1943, DeWitt Freeman joined the United States Navy and entered its flight training program, embarking on a military career that would span decades and allow him the opportunity to pursue his passion of flying; and

WHEREAS, in 1944, DeWitt Freeman earned his wings and deftly flew FM-2 "Wildcat" fighter planes in support of the Allied forces until the end of the war and then transitioned into the F6F Hellcat and F8F Bearcat; and

WHEREAS, after the war, DeWitt Freeman received a commission and attended several colleges, eventually earning a bachelor's degree; and

WHEREAS, DeWitt Freeman's first jet assignment was the Lockheed P-80 at Edwards Air Force Base, where, as part of an elite testing team, he became the first United States Navy pilot to control the Regulus missile in flight; and

WHEREAS, a respected leader and knowledgeable aviator, DeWitt Freeman rose through the ranks of the United States Navy, commanding the F-4B Phantom-equipped squadron VF-41, one of the first units deployed when the Russians placed nuclear-armed missiles in Cuba; and

WHEREAS, DeWitt Freeman also commanded the fleet order of the USS *Truckee*, the aircraft carrier USS *Saratoga*, and Carrier Division Four and served as deputy commander of NATO Southern Command and Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel before his retirement as rear admiral in 1975; and

WHEREAS, in retirement, DeWitt Freeman settled near Louisa County and remained actively involved in aviation, continued to fly his own planes, and served as board chair of the Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society; and

WHEREAS, DeWitt Freeman provided extraordinary leadership and invaluable experience and expertise to the Louisa County Industrial Development Authority to help the county build its own airport; and

WHEREAS, embarking on this tremendous project, DeWitt Freeman worked tirelessly as chair of Louisa County's Airport Committee to oversee the myriad details involved in such an undertaking; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, Louisa County honored DeWitt Freeman's work by dedicating the airport as Freeman Field, and celebrated its opening in 1987; and

WHEREAS, today, Louisa County and the surrounding area continue to reap the economic benefits of Freeman Field, which accommodates a full range of private aircraft and corporate fleets; and

WHEREAS, a leader in aviation, DeWitt Freeman earned numerous awards and accolades throughout his career, including induction into the Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, a man of great integrity, DeWitt Freeman served his country and community with great distinction and leaves behind a sterling legacy of service that others may strive to emulate; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his wife, Mary, DeWitt Freeman will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his children, William, Gary, and Susan, all of whom are pilots, and their families; numerous other family members and friends; and the residents of Louisa County; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of an admired aviator, Rear Admiral DeWitt Leroy Freeman, USN (Ret.); and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Rear Admiral DeWitt Leroy Freeman, USN (Ret.) as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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