

14104910D

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 121

Offered February 17, 2014

Memorializing Jack Schaefer.

Patron—Ware

WHEREAS, the Western is a form of the novel unique to the literature of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the figure of the armed frontiersman on horseback, fleeing the civilization of the East to engage nature—his own, his adversaries', his beasts', and, not least, in desert, mountain, or open range, nature herself, in the raw—is foundational to the character of the American people; and

WHEREAS, if all unawares, the men and women of the American West, in conveying "the American Dream" to the farthest reaches of the continent, established a culture of independence and adventure whose vestiges remain manifest despite all of the transformations of the modern era; and

WHEREAS, the Western Writers of America identified *Shane* by Jack Schaefer to be the finest Western novel ever written; and

WHEREAS, though a native of Ohio, Jack Schaefer "started writing fiction to calm down in the evenings" during his years as associate editor of the *Virginian-Pilot* of Norfolk, thus bequeathing to Virginians a particular claim upon the first expressions of his literary consciousness; and

WHEREAS, Jack Schaefer's first work of fiction, "The Rider from Nowhere," was published in 1945 in the adventure magazine *Argosy*; and

WHEREAS, in 1949 appeared the full development of that first story, in the novel *Shane*, held now by many literary critics to be not only the finest novel of the American character in its encounter with the West, but also one of the greatest of all stories of heroic manhood in its every relationship—with self, with other men—be they devoted friend or deadly foe—with woman, and with youth; and

WHEREAS, in his delineation of the imagination of a boy in his experience of the sterling qualities of manhood embodied by Shane, Jack Schaefer has written, too, one of the greatest of all stories of the passage-of-age from the innocence of childhood into the fullness of adulthood—and that in the highest of all the qualities of adult life, redemption; and

WHEREAS, Shane represented "the full sum of the integrate force" of manhood—of the individual "forging his lone way out of an unknown past in the utter loneliness of his own immovable and instinctive defiance [who was] the symbol of all the dim, formless imaginings of danger and terror in the untested realm of human potentialities beyond [the] understanding" of a youth; and

WHEREAS, in straining to comprehend the man before him, the boy of Jack Schaefer's novel comes at last to be able to recognize before him "the Shane of the adventures I had dreamed for him, cool and competent...in the simple solitude of his own invincible completeness"; and

WHEREAS, a full half-century now has passed since the publication of *Shane*, and something more than a century since the birth of its author, Jack Schaefer; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the members of the body affirm that the experiences of his years resident in Virginia as a reporter contributed to the exemplary literary achievements of Jack Schaefer; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Carl Schaefer, of whom Jack Schaefer, in the dedication of *Shane*, wrote, "To Carl, for my first son, my first book," as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

HR121