

2014 SPECIAL SESSION I

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 558

Offered September 8, 2014

Celebrating the life of Peter Murray Johns.

Patron—Peace

WHEREAS, Peter Murray Johns, an admired entrepreneur and philanthropist who dedicated his life to enhancing and supporting New Kent County, died on August 21, 2014; and

WHEREAS, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, Peter "Pete" Murray Johns graduated from Mayfield High School, where he set a longstanding record in track; he earned a bachelor's degree from Tulane University and was drafted by the Houston Oilers as a defensive back; and

WHEREAS, after playing two seasons in the National Football League, Pete Johns worked as the owner of Belfridge Farms in Texas, where he bred, trained, and showed Egyptian and Arabian horses; he successfully advocated for pari-mutuel racing in Texas and later led similar efforts in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Pete Johns moved to the Commonwealth in 1989 as an employee of Delmarva Properties; he developed a love of New Kent County and made it his personal mission to help the community grow; and

WHEREAS, supporting the construction of industrial and commercial parks, waterlines, sewer lines, and natural gas lines throughout the county, Pete Johns strengthened the county's infrastructure and helped create jobs while preserving green spaces and the area's natural beauty; and

WHEREAS, sharing his passion for horse racing, Pete Johns spearheaded the creation of the Commonwealth's only pari-mutuel race track, Colonial Downs, and established the annual Taste of New Kent wine festival; and

WHEREAS, Pete Johns also helped develop the Farms of New Kent, which includes a championship golf course and the award-winning New Kent Winery and Vineyards, which opened in 2008 and earned the 2011 Virginia Governor's Cup for its 2009 Reserve Chardonnay; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his son, Peter, Jr., Pete Johns will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Patricia; daughter, Kimberly, and her family; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Peter Murray Johns, a respected businessman and a pillar of the New Kent County community; 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 Peter Murray Johns as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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