

2014 SPECIAL SESSION I

INTRODUCED

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5039

Offered June 11, 2014

Commending Donald R. Buma.

Patron—Alexander

WHEREAS, Donald R. Buma, an admired member of the Norfolk community who preserved the history and heritage of the workers who developed the Norfolk Botanical Garden, retires as executive director of the garden in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Norfolk Botanical Garden, a 155-acre, nationally accredited garden, was established in 1938 with funding from a Works Progress Administration (WPA) grant; the project employed 220 African Americans, who cleared 25 acres of dense vegetation and planted azaleas, rhododendrons, daffodils, and other trees and shrubs; and

WHEREAS, Donald Buma became the executive director of the Norfolk Botanical Garden in 1998 and began an extensive search to identify and honor the hardworking individuals who had developed the garden; and

WHEREAS, under Donald Buma's able leadership, 55 names were identified, and in 2009, he and Mary Ferguson—the only living WPA gardener—unveiled a bronze sculpture of a gardener in the WPA Memorial Garden; and

WHEREAS, collaborating with William H. Ruffner Middle School, Donald Buma created a documentary on the WPA gardeners that won first prize at the International Conference of Future Problem Solving, and he succeeded in having an article on the WPA gardeners published in a distinguished, international gardening magazine; and

WHEREAS, Donald Buma also helped establish the WPA Garden Heritage Celebration, an annual event honoring the legacy of the WPA gardeners; in 2012, he donated all research materials on the gardeners to the Harrison B. Wilson Archives at Norfolk State University for preservation and further study; and

WHEREAS, Donald Buma strengthened the future of the Norfolk Botanical Garden by working with Old Dominion University to secure the garden's designation on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places and founding the garden's Diversity Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Donald R. Buma on the occasion of his retirement in 2014; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Donald R. Buma as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his accomplishments in service to the Norfolk community.

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