

20102369D

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 159

Offered February 25, 2020

Celebrating the life of Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.

Patrons—Edwards, Barker, Bell, Boysko, Chafin, Chase, Cosgrove, Deeds, DeSteph, Dunnivant, Ebbin, Favola, Hanger, Hashmi, Howell, Kiggans, Lewis, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, Mason, McClellan, McDougale, McPike, Morrissey, Newman, Norment, Obenshain, Peake, Petersen, Pillion, Reeves, Ruff, Saslaw, Spruill, Stanley, Stuart, Surovell and Vogel; Delegates: Adams, D.M., Avoli, Bagby, Cole, J.G., Cole, M.L., Delaney, Heretick, Hope, Kory, Morefield, Orrock, Rasoul, Reid, Rush, Simonds, Ware, Watts and Wright

WHEREAS, Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., renowned historian of the Civil War, prolific author, and beloved professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, died on November 2, 2019; and

WHEREAS, born in Danville in 1930, James "Bud" Robertson earned a bachelor's degree from Randolph-Macon University in 1955 and a doctorate from Emory University in 1959; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, Bud Robertson was tasked by President John F. Kennedy to head the United States Civil War Centennial Commission, leading 34 state commissions and 100 local committees to produce an honorable and well-regarded commemoration; and

WHEREAS, after brief stints at the University of Iowa, George Washington University, and the University of Montana, Bud Robertson joined the faculty at Virginia Tech, where he would teach for 44 years until his retirement in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Bud Robertson's popular course on the Civil War attracted hundreds of students each semester and, since 1992, he held the title of Alumni Distinguished Professor in recognition of his extraordinary accomplishments and academic citizenship at the university; and

WHEREAS, beyond his classes, Bud Robertson was influential in other corners of the Virginia Tech community; having served as president of the Virginia Tech Athletic Association and faculty chairman of athletics from 1979 to 1991, Bud Robertson was inducted into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame in 2008; and

WHEREAS, Bud Robertson's impressive knowledge and understanding of the Civil War was shared around the world with both academics and the general public through over 40 books, more than 350 radio essays, and thousands of talks; and

WHEREAS, Bud Robertson's 1997 biography of General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend*, was a best seller, earning many awards and serving as inspiration for the 2003 feature film, "Gods and Generals," for which Bud Robertson served as historical consultant; and

WHEREAS, adding to his legacy in the Commonwealth, Bud Robertson was founding director of the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech and the only nonlegislative member on the executive committee for the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission, demonstrating his talents both as an expert scholar and an effective manager; and

WHEREAS, Bud Robertson received many honors and accolades over his life, including the Virginius Dabney Award from the Museum of the Confederacy, the Virginia Press Association's 2004 Virginian of the Year distinction, the 1997 Best Non-Fiction Book Award from the Library of Virginia, and the Outstanding Professor Award from the Virginia Council for Higher Education; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his first wife, Elizabeth, Bud Robertson will be dearly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Elizabeth; his children, James III, Howard, Beth, William, and Elizabeth, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., a gifted historian who touched the lives of thousands of Virginia Tech students and millions of people worldwide; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

SJ159