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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 99

Offered February 10, 2020

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Elliot Schewel.

Patrons—Peake, Barker, Bell, Boysko, Chafin, Chase, Cosgrove, Deeds, DeSteph, Dunnavant, Ebbin, Edwards, Favola, Hanger, Hashmi, Howell, Kiggans, Lewis, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, Mason, McClellan, McDougale, McPike, Morrissey, Newman, Norment, Obenshain, Petersen, Pillion, Reeves, Ruff, Saslaw, Spruill, Stanley, Stuart, Surovell and Vogel; Delegate: Carr

WHEREAS, the Honorable Elliot Schewel, a heroic veteran, respected businessman, esteemed statesman, and beloved member of the Lynchburg community, died on December 15, 2019; and

WHEREAS, with the exception of his time in college and the military, Elliot Schewel lived his entire life in Lynchburg; he was attending Washington and Lee University when the attack on Pearl Harbor compelled him to enlist with the United States Army Air Corps, in which he served valorously until the end of World War II; and

WHEREAS, completing his studies after the war, Elliot Schewel built a formidable career running his family's furniture business, Schewel Furniture Company, for more than 50 years; working alongside his cousin Bert, he grew the company substantially, to the point that it now boasts dozens of locations throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, galvanized by the civil rights movement in the 1960s, Elliot Schewel entered local politics in 1965 when he was elected to the Lynchburg City Council; 10 years later, he won a seat in the Senate of Virginia representing the residents of the City of Lynchburg, and Bedford and Amherst Counties, whom he served for the next 20 years; and

WHEREAS, throughout his political career, Elliot Schewel advocated for fair housing, public education, fiscal responsibility, and the rights of women, addressing the systemic inequities that burdened many in the community; often campaigning on the motto of "Straight Talk, Hard Work," he was respected by his colleagues for his principled approach to the ethical issues of the day; and

WHEREAS, Elliot Schewel had many accomplishments in his two decades in the Senate of Virginia; along with chairing the Senate Committee on Education and Health and serving as a member of the Senate Committee on Finance, he was also instrumental in the General Assembly's adoption of the Commonwealth's first conflict of interest legislation; and

WHEREAS, in honor of his years of service on the Board of Overseers of Lynchburg College, now the University of Lynchburg, the school presented an honorary doctorate of humane letters to Elliot Schewel in 2000 and renamed its Centennial Hall as the Elliot & Rosel Schewel Hall in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Elliot Schewel served on many other boards throughout his life, including the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Anti-Defamation League, Centra Foundation, the United Negro College Fund, the Lynchburg Jewish Community Council, and the Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship; and

WHEREAS, guided by his abiding faith to serve others, Elliot Schewel was a lifelong member of Agudath Sholom Synagogue in Lynchburg, where he enjoyed worship and fellowship with his community; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his adoring wife of 68 years, Rosel, Elliot Schewel will be dearly remembered and sorely missed by his children, Steve, Susan, and Michael, their families, and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle; 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 the Honorable Elliot Schewel, who had an outsized impact on his community as a veteran, businessman, statesman, and friend; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Honorable Elliot Schewel as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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