

2021 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 326

Celebrating the life of David Anthony Rice.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 28, 2021
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 1, 2021

WHEREAS, David Anthony Rice, a native of the Commonwealth who is regarded as one of the most influential bluegrass guitarists of the past half-century and a prime exemplar of the progressive "newgrass" genre, died on December 25, 2020; and

WHEREAS, born in Danville, David "Tony" Rice was raised in Los Angeles, California, where he learned to play the mandolin and guitar alongside his family of musicians; and

WHEREAS, Tony Rice made his debut at the age of nine, performing "Under Your Spell Again" on the *Town Hall Party* radio show; for several years after, he performed with his brothers at folk clubs throughout California; and

WHEREAS, moving back to the East Coast as a teenager, Tony Rice joined J.D. Crowe & the New South, one of the country's leading bluegrass groups, in 1971; their eponymous album, released in 1975 and featuring Tony Rice on guitar and lead vocals, is often celebrated as a groundbreaking album in the history of the genre; and

WHEREAS, following his success with J.D. Crowe & the New South, Tony Rice returned to California to further develop as a musician, collaborating with the pioneering mandolinist David Grisman and studying chord theory under jazz master John Carlini; and

WHEREAS, alongside other players, such as Ricky Skaggs, Sam Bush, and Béla Fleck, Tony Rice blended bluegrass, jazz, and folk idioms to develop an innovative style known as "newgrass" or "new acoustic music," which over the past half-century has gained legions of fans for its inventive approach to the traditional bluegrass repertoire; and

WHEREAS, Tony Rice enjoyed further success with his own group, the Tony Rice Unit, as well as several other ensembles over the years, including the Bluegrass Album Band; he also produced several well-received solo albums and collaborated with such musical luminaries as Norman Blake, Jerry Garcia, Emmylou Harris, and Peter Rowan; and

WHEREAS, hailing from a family of musicians, Tony Rice formed The Rice Brothers in the 1980s with brothers Larry, Ron, and Wyatt, producing multiple critically-acclaimed albums with the group; and

WHEREAS, best known for his virtuosic solos, Tony Rice was also an accomplished composer, rhythm player, and vocalist, who was admired for his warm and distinctive baritone voice until muscle tension dysphonia led him to stop singing in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, Tony Rice received many awards and accolades throughout his career, including a Grammy Award with the New South in 1983 for Best Country Instrumental Performance and an induction into the International Bluegrass Hall of Fame in 2013; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his brother Larry, Tony Rice will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his loving wife, Pamela; his daughter, India; his brothers, Wyatt and Ron; 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 David Anthony Rice, an esteemed musician who was a sterling example of the Commonwealth's contributions to America's guitar and bluegrass traditions; and, be it

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

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