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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 552

Offered January 14, 2023

*Celebrating the life of Chester Pike Avery, Jr.*

Patron—Bennett-Parker

WHEREAS, Chester Pike Avery, Jr., an esteemed executive with the federal government, prominent advocate for individuals with disabilities, and beloved member of the Alexandria community, died on September 8, 2022; and

WHEREAS, after losing his vision at the age of 17, Chester "Chet" Pike Avery, Jr., went on to earn a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in counseling and education from Harvard University; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery joined the federal government in 1964, working first in the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and later in the United States Department of Education until his retirement in 1996; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery's accomplishments in public service included overseeing the development of a federal student financial aid handbook, monitoring the implementation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and serving in leadership and executive positions with various offices; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery was an active and influential leader in the Alexandria community for many years, serving on the Alexandria Human Rights Commission for three decades and with the Special Education Advisory Committee for Alexandria City Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery was the first appointee to the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities and served with the organization for more than 35 years, spearheading various initiatives designed to improve the accessibility of public services in Alexandria, including a human rights ordinance recognizing individuals with disabilities as a protected class; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery was at the forefront of the movement to develop descriptive videos that would enable individuals with vision impairments to more fully experience plays and films, working closely with the American Council of the Blind's Audio Description Project; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery's service and expertise led to his membership on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Ear Inc., and his appointment by Governor Mark R. Warner to the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his outsized impact in the community, Chet Avery was the recipient of many honors and accolades over the years, including the John Duty Collins III Outstanding Advocate for Persons with Disabilities Award in 1998 from the Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Chet Avery will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his loving wife of more than 50 years, Sabra; his son, Bradford, and his family; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Chester Pike Avery, Jr., a cherished member of the Alexandria community and a forceful voice for disability justice and welfare; 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 Chester Pike Avery, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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