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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 328

Offered February 13, 2023

Celebrating the life of Gary Charles Schroen.

Patrons—Ebbin; Delegate: Sickles

WHEREAS, Gary Charles Schroen, an honorable veteran, legendary member of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, and beloved member of the Alexandria community, died on August 1, 2022; and

WHEREAS, as a young man, Gary Schroen served his country with honor and distinction as part of the Army Security Agency, the United States Army's signals intelligence branch at the time, and was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany; and

WHEREAS, following his honorable discharge from the military in 1962, Gary Schroen attended Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, then worked as a fifth grade teacher in the Detroit Public Schools system, where he contributed greatly to the growth and development of his students; and

WHEREAS, Gary Schroen joined the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1969 and would go on to serve as station chief for both Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s and to become one of the agency's foremost experts on the Near East; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1990s, Gary Schroen was part of what is now called the CIA's Mission Center for Counterterrorism, where he was highly involved in the agency's attempts to kill or capture Osama bin Laden, the founder and leader of the terrorist organization al-Qaeda; he then also served for a time as deputy chief of the CIA's Near East Division in its Directorate of Operations from 1999 to 2001; and

WHEREAS, although preparing for retirement at the time, two weeks following 9/11, Gary Schroen famously led the first team of CIA officers to enter Afghanistan in order to establish connections with the United Islamic National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, also known as the Northern Alliance, and to search for Osama bin Laden, spearheading the United States' efforts to defeat al-Qaeda and the Taliban; and

WHEREAS, Gary Schroen memorialized his experiences from these early days of the invasion of Afghanistan in his best-selling book, *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan*, which was published in 2005 to much acclaim; and

WHEREAS, Gary Schroen bravely faced many harrowing experiences during his time with the CIA in service to the country and ultimately retired in 2001 as one of the most decorated officers in the agency's history; and

WHEREAS, in his later years, Gary Schroen supported the CIA as a contractor by teaching tradecraft to new recruits, preparing the next generation of CIA officers for the task of defending the United States; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his son, Christopher, Gary Schroen will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his loving wife, Anne; his children, Jennifer and Kate, 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 Gary Charles Schroen, an American hero and leading member of the United States Central Intelligence Agency whose dedication to the country serves as an inspiration to all Virginians; and, be it

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

INTRODUCED

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