

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 352

Celebrating the life of the Honorable John Samuel Johnston, Jr.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2023
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 22, 2023

WHEREAS, the Honorable John Samuel Johnston, Jr., a longtime judge of the 24th Judicial Circuit of Virginia, died on December 10, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Samuel "Sam" Johnston grew up in Alabama and attended public schools; he earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama and remained a loyal fan of the Alabama Crimson Tide throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, Sam Johnston earned a law degree from the University of Virginia, where he was elected to the law school council as a third-year student, then served as a clerk for a federal judge in Alabama; and

WHEREAS, Sam Johnston practiced law with the firm Kizer, Phillips & Petty until he was selected as a judge in the Campbell County General District Court of the 24th Judicial District of Virginia in 1977; at the time, he was the youngest district court judge in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, four years later, Sam Johnston was elevated to the Campbell County Circuit Court of the 24th Judicial Circuit of Virginia, becoming the youngest circuit court judge in the Commonwealth at the age of 34; and

WHEREAS, Sam Johnston presided over his courts with great fairness and wisdom and earned the admiration of his colleagues for his patience and professionalism; among his many achievements as a judge, he proudly oversaw the construction of a new courthouse in Campbell County in 1991; and

WHEREAS, Sam Johnston served the Commonwealth as a member of task forces related to drunk driving and parole and sentencing reform, and he was a charter member of the Virginia Sentencing Commission; and

WHEREAS, Sam Johnston was a sought-after lecturer and presenter who offered his wisdom and expertise to civic organizations and bar associations throughout the Commonwealth and the nation; he authored a humorous collection of anecdotes from his time on the bench, *Why Judges Wear Robes*, and coauthored, *The Art and Science of Mastering the Jury Trial*; and

WHEREAS, in later life, Sam Johnston was a founding member of Juridical Solutions, a mediation group staffed by retired judges from across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career, Sam Johnston was a voracious reader, an expert at crossword puzzles, and an avid outdoorsman who spent countless hours in his garden and was well known for his wild game dinners at the end of every hunting season; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by one son, Adam, Sam Johnston will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his beloved wife of 54 years, Elizabeth; his children, Margaret, Whitaker, Mollie, Annie Gordon, and bonus daughter Page, 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 the Honorable John Samuel Johnston, Jr., a highly respected former judge in Campbell County; 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 John Samuel Johnston, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

ENROLLED

SJ352ER