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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 165

Offered February 11, 2024

Celebrating the life of Harold Martin Gross.

Patrons—Watts; Senator: Marsden

WHEREAS, Harold Martin Gross, a highly admired attorney, congressional staffer, and volunteer leader who touched countless lives as an advocate for civil rights and a champion for the Native American community, died on November 1, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Harold "Hal" Martin Gross grew up in New York City, where one of his earliest experiences with politics was handing out pins and leaflets in support of Franklin D. Roosevelt's campaign for a fourth term as president in 1944; and

WHEREAS, in 1945, Hal Gross and his family relocated to Palo Alto, California; he subsequently served the nation as a military police officer in the United States Army and earned a bachelor's degree and a law degree from Stanford University; and

WHEREAS, Hal Gross opened his own law firm in 1961 and specialized in civil rights litigation; over the course of the next five years, he became the chair of the Mid-Peninsula Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and vice president of the Palo-Alto-Stanford Branch of the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Hal Gross sold his legal practice and moved to Oregon as the first paid staff member of the ACLU; during that period, he also served on the Oregon Workers' Compensation Board and traveled throughout the state to hear cases, primarily in the timber industry; and

WHEREAS, Hal Gross next served as a state field coordinator for the successful primary re-election campaign of United States Senator Wayne Morse, who later became the chair of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Education; and

WHEREAS, Senator Morse invited Hal Gross to come to Washington, D.C., as a member of his staff, and from 1969 to 1974, he also served as counsel to the National Congress of American Indians and the National Council on Indian Opportunity, as well as founder and executive director of the Indian Legal Information Development Service; he was notably one of the first to lobby the professional football team then known as the Washington Redskins to change its name; and

WHEREAS, Hal Gross eventually joined the office of United States Senator Alan Cranston and spent the next 13 years drafting legislation and policy statements on energy, environmental, labor, and Native American issues; and

WHEREAS, Hal Gross joined the Fairfax County Democratic Committee in 1985 and served the committee in various capacities for three decades; he was an emeritus member of the Mason District Democratic Committee, returned to practicing law for a few years, then served as a congressional liaison for the U.S. Department of Agriculture under President Bill Clinton in 1994; and

WHEREAS, after his well-earned retirement, Hal Gross took up stamp collecting and joined the American Philatelic Society in 1985; he also regularly attended meetings of the Springfield Stamp Club for more than 25 years; and

WHEREAS, Hal Gross will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his beloved wife of 53 years, Penny; his children, David, Sabra, and Pamela, and their families; 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 Harold Martin Gross, a distinguished attorney who made lasting contributions to communities throughout the Commonwealth and the United States; 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 Harold Martin Gross as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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