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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 750

Offered June 27, 2024

Celebrating the life of Joseph Henry Seipel.

Patron—

WHEREAS, Joseph Henry Seipel, a renowned sculptor whose transformational tenure as dean of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts brought the institution to the forefront of graduate arts programs around the country, died on June 12, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Seipel grew up in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and began studying sculpture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; he subsequently earned a master's degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art's Rinehart School of Sculpture; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Seipel first joined the faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 1974 as a sculpture instructor; he became known for his colossal ceramic works, demonstrating to his students that they could achieve their dreams, no matter how great; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Seipel served as a professor and chair of the Department of Sculpture for several years while also staying active in the Richmond community as the founder of the artist-run 1708 Gallery and co-founder of a restaurant in the Fan District; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Joseph Seipel was selected as the senior associate dean of the VCU School of the Arts and served in that capacity until 2009 when he became the dean of the Savannah College of Art and Design; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Seipel returned to Richmond in 2011 as dean of the VCU School of the Arts and led efforts that transformed the Richmond community and brought the school to national prominence; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Seipel took on leadership roles in national and international organizations, where he raised awareness of VCU's exceptional arts programs; he also expanded course offerings to include digital media to bring new generations of artists to the school and held parties to showcase student artwork; and

WHEREAS, believing firmly that the arts are a foundational aspect of multiple disciplines, Joseph Seipel built a culture of creativity and collaboration across the entire university and health system and was admired by students and his peers alike for his wit, compassion, and dedication; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Seipel was also responsible for several renovation and construction projects at VCU, leading the revitalization of the Depot Building, which houses classrooms, studios, and a student gallery, and the design, planning, and fundraising for the Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades, Joseph Seipel received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center, the Theresa Pollak Lifetime Achievement Award from Richmond Magazine, and the 2018 Person of the Year award from the Richmond Times-Dispatch; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from the VCU School of the Arts, Joseph Seipel briefly served as interim director of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, then opened two studios in Richmond and returned to creating art full time; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Seipel will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Suzanne; his daughter, Chloe, and her family; his siblings, Marlene and Ken; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Joseph Henry Seipel, the distinguished former dean of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts; 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 Joseph Henry Seipel as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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