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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 640

Offered July 18, 2024

Celebrating the life of Frank Kilgore.

Patron—

WHEREAS, Frank Kilgore, a respected attorney, passionate environmentalist, advocate for education, and unwavering champion for the people of Southwest Virginia, died on July 14, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the proud son of a coal miner, Frank Kilgore overcame poverty through hard work and determination, cultivating an appreciation for the importance of a good education that lasted throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Clinch Valley College, now known as the University of Virginia's College at Wise, Frank Kilgore worked as a forester and developed an abiding interest in the great outdoors; and

WHEREAS, unable to afford law school, Frank Kilgore began reading the law under a practicing attorney and ultimately became a lawyer focused on environmental issues in Southwest Virginia; he used his legal acumen to make a difference in the region by fighting for strip mine regulation and representing members of the United Mine Workers during strikes in the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kilgore was a champion for the people of Southwest Virginia and worked to counteract stereotypes about the region and other Appalachian communities through articles, books, public appearances, and advocacy; his unparalleled knowledge of the region was an invaluable resource for journalists, authors, and researchers; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kilgore worked directly with government officials to build bipartisan support for programs to enhance the quality of life in Southwest Virginia, such as funding for clean water systems, economic revitalization, conservation projects, and education initiatives, becoming known as an unofficial one-man chamber of commerce for the region; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kilgore played a crucial role in the founding of the Appalachian School of Law in Grundy and the Appalachian College of Pharmacy in Oakwood; he developed an encyclopedic knowledge of the accolades earned by Southwest Virginia schools and the achievements of their students and never hesitated to sing the praises of both; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Frank Kilgore was an advocate for the advancement of women in the legal profession and supported the appointment of more women judges in the region; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kilgore's name was synonymous with outdoor recreation; he was involved in the creation of the Mendota Trail and donated some of the land for what is now Clinch River State Park, where he personally blazed trails in one section of the park; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kilgore also led efforts to encourage the Commonwealth to acquire the Channels Natural Area Preserve, a unique system of sandstone crevices and boulders that are millions of years old; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kilgore's many and varied contributions to Southwest Virginia touched countless lives and left a positive impact that will be felt by generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Frank Kilgore will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Teresa; his children, Joyce and Jason, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Frank Kilgore, a pillar of the community in Southwest Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Frank Kilgore as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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