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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 217

Offered January 22, 2025

*Celebrating the life of Abraham Mitchell.*

Patron—Jordan

WHEREAS, Abraham Mitchell, a longtime presence at the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association Basketball Tournament who delighted staff members, players, and fans with his colorful outfits and commitment to sportsmanship, died on January 7, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Abraham “Ham” Mitchell made his career as a mortician in the Tidewater area and began attending the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Basketball Tournament when his nephew, Peter, was a student at Norfolk State University; and

WHEREAS, Ham Mitchell decided to wear a shirt and tie to stand out while supporting his nephew on the court; he continued attending the CIAA Basketball Tournament long after his nephew graduated and began changing outfits at half time to support both teams; and

WHEREAS, as the years went on, Ham Mitchell's visually striking attire became a hallmark of the tournament; his wardrobe grew to include more than 100 colorful suits, many of them custom made, as well as hats and umbrellas, and he changed outfits as many as eight times a day to ensure every team was represented; and

WHEREAS, Ham Mitchell, known as “Mr. CIAA,” was a fixture at the tournament for years, following along as it relocated from Greensboro, North Carolina, to Hampton, Richmond, and Norfolk, then back to North Carolina in Winston-Salem, Raleigh, and Charlotte; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his unique contributions to the tournament over the years, Ham Mitchell was inducted into the John B. McLendon CIAA Hall of Fame as a fan in 2016; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Abraham Mitchell, an irreplaceable figure in college athletics; and, be it

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

INTRODUCED

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