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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 221

Offered January 27, 2025

*Commending Emma Randel.*

Patron—French

WHEREAS, Emma Randel, founder of Shenandoah Vineyards, which is now the oldest continually operating vineyard in Virginia, was a pioneer in the development of the Commonwealth's thriving, award-winning wine industry; and

WHEREAS, Emma Randel grew up in the Shenandoah Valley and returned home to her family's farm in Edinburg after graduating from Duke University, working as a teacher in a secretarial school, marrying her husband, Jim, and raising five children; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, Emma Randel planted 5,000 grapevines as a hobby and a pseudo-retirement plan on her family's land, which had been a working farm since the 1700s; and

WHEREAS, at the time, the Commonwealth was not considered suitable for winemaking, but as Emma Randel's knowledge of the local climate, soil conditions, and viticulture grew, she began to see the region's potential and opened Shenandoah Vineyards in 1979; and

WHEREAS, three years later, Emma Randel led efforts to establish the Shenandoah Valley as the Commonwealth's first federally recognized wine-producing region with an American Viticultural Area designation; and

WHEREAS, Emma Randel's accomplishments helped legitimize the Commonwealth as a wine producer on the international stage and led the way for the development of more than 300 other wineries representing more than 5,000 acres of grapes; and

WHEREAS, Emma Randel continued to manage Shenandoah Vineyards into her 90s before retiring in 2018; the winery is currently owned and operated by Michael Shaps Wineworks and continues to produce award-winning wines that are enjoyed throughout the Commonwealth, the United States, and the world; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades over the course of her career, Emma Randel received the Virginia Women in Wine Trailblazer Award in 2024; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Emma Randel hereby be commended for her transformational contributions to the Commonwealth's wine industry as the founder of Shenandoah Vineyards; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Emma Randel as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for her legacy of personal and professional achievements.

INTRODUCED

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