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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 324

Offered January 30, 2025

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable Frank Miller Ruff, Jr.*

Patrons—Mulchi, Aird, Bagby, Boysko, Carroll Foy, Cifers, Craig, Deeds, DeSteph, Diggs, Durant, Ebbin, Favola, French, Hackworth, Hashmi, Head, Jordan, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, McDougle, McPike, Obenshain, Peake, Pekarsky, Perry, Pillion, Reeves, Roem, Rouse, Salim, Srinivasan, Stanley, Stuart, Sturtevant, Suetterlein, Surovell, VanValkenburg and Williams Graves; Delegates: Arnold, Austin, Ballard, Batten, Bennett-Parker, Bloxom, Bulova, Campbell, Carr, Cherry, Clark, Coyner, Davis, Delaney, Earley, Ennis, Fowler, Freitas, Garrett, Gilbert, Green, Griffin, Hernandez, Herring, Higgins, Hodges, Hope, Jones, Kent, Kilgore, Krizek, Laufer, Leftwich, Maldonado, Marshall, McClure, McNamara, McQuinn, Morefield, O'Quinn, Oates, Obenshain, Orrock, Owen, Phillips, Rasoul, Reaser, Reid, Runion, Scott, D., Sewell, Shin, Sickles, Simon, Sullivan, Taylor, Torian, Tran, Wachsmann, Walker, Ward, Ware, Watts, Webert, Wiley, Willett, Williams, Wilt, Wright, Wyatt and Zehr

WHEREAS, the Honorable Frank Miller Ruff, Jr., a highly admired public servant who enhanced the economic vitality of rural communities in Southwest and Southside Virginia as one of the most senior members of the General Assembly, died on October 26, 2024; and

WHEREAS, born in Bedford County, Frank Ruff attended the University of Richmond and pursued a career as an entrepreneur; in later life, his experiences as a small business owner helped him to better understand the challenges facing his constituents; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors, Frank Ruff represented the residents of Clarksville for several years and was selected as vice chair; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service to the Commonwealth, Frank Ruff ran for and was elected to the House of Delegates in 1993; he ably represented the residents of the 61st District until 2000, when he took office in the Senate of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, during his distinguished tenure as a state lawmaker, Frank Ruff introduced and supported numerous important pieces of legislation to benefit his constituents and all Virginians, focusing on workforce training, economic development, and education; and

WHEREAS, Frank Ruff also offered his wise insights to several standing committees, most notably the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, which is responsible for writing the state budget; and

WHEREAS, among his many achievements, Frank Ruff assisted with the founding and funding of GO Virginia, which fosters business growth and job creation throughout the Commonwealth, and he was the lead sponsor for the creation of the Center for Rural Virginia, a nonprofit organization fostering economic growth, which was subsequently renamed as the Senator Frank M. Ruff, Jr. Center for Rural Virginia in his honor; and

WHEREAS, Frank Ruff worked with community colleges and businesses to develop workforce training initiatives for in-demand fields and create certification programs that allowed students to learn trades and find employment more quickly; and

WHEREAS, Frank Ruff served on the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission since its inception and most recently served as chair; the commission helped diversify the economies of areas that were previously dependent on tobacco-based agriculture and allowed countless Virginians to build new careers and remain in these communities; and

WHEREAS, Frank Ruff was well known for his quiet but effective leadership style and his commitment to commonsense problem solving that led to bipartisan solutions; he was a trusted mentor and friend to many of his fellow members of the General Assembly, who was highly admired for his sense of humor, compassion, and humility; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Frank Ruff won his seventh term in the Senate of Virginia but resigned before taking office due to health concerns; over the course of his career, he served the Commonwealth with utmost integrity and dedication, leaving behind a legacy of excellence to his colleagues and constituents; and

WHEREAS, Frank Ruff's proudest achievements were those as a husband, father, and grandfather, and he will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Jessie; his children, Miller, Thomas, David, and Genny, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Frank Miller Ruff, Jr., an esteemed state legislator who touched the lives of countless Virginians through his incomparable dedication to public service; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Frank Miller Ruff, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.