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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 234

Offered February 4, 2025

*Commending the Virginia Opera Association, Inc.*

Patrons—Williams Graves, Jordan, Craig, DeSteph, Diggs, Durant and French

WHEREAS, for 50 years, the Virginia Opera Association, Inc., has enhanced cultural life throughout the Commonwealth by hosting magnificent performances at multiple venues, uplifting young performers, and providing unique educational and outreach programs to members of the public; and

WHEREAS, established in Norfolk in 1974 by a passionate group of opera enthusiasts led by Edythe C. Harrison, the Virginia Opera was an instant hit in the community, featuring a sold-out production of *La bohème* in its inaugural 1975 season; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its loyal local following, the Virginia Opera earned national renown for its professional accomplishments and commitment to artistic excellence under the leadership of longtime artistic director Peter Mark; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Opera expanded to Richmond in 1977 and to Northern Virginia in 1992; it remains the only professional opera company in North America that performs at three venues in three distinct regions, the Edythe C. and Stanley L. Harrison Opera House, the Carpenter Theatre at Dominion Energy Center, and the Center for the Arts at George Mason University; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, the Virginia Opera was designated by the General Assembly as the Official Opera Company of the Commonwealth of Virginia, recognizing its history of achievements and preeminent role in the performing arts statewide; and

WHEREAS, over the course of its history, the Virginia Opera has identified and promoted many of the nation's most talented young singers and performers and commissioned and presented world premieres of several operas, including *A Christmas Carol*, *Simon Bolivar*, *Pocahontas*, *Rappahannock County*, and *Harriet, the Woman Called Moses*, as well as the upcoming production of *Loving v. Virginia* in 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Opera is currently led by Adam Turner, who has worked diligently to maintain the musical and dramatic integrity of every production during his seven seasons as artistic director and chief conductor; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Virginia Opera Association, Inc., hereby be commended on the occasion of its 50th anniversary season; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Virginia Opera Association, Inc., as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for its legacy of contributions to the performing arts in the Commonwealth.