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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 330

Offered February 20, 2025

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Gerald O'Neal Clemens.

Patrons—Suetterlein, Obenshain, Peake and Stanley

WHEREAS, the Honorable Gerald O'Neal Clemens, an esteemed jurist who made numerous contributions to the Salem community, died on December 26, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Gerald “Tom” Clemens grew up in Prices Fork and skipped two grades in elementary school, leading to his graduation from high school at the age of 16; he continued his education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, where he was a member of the Corps of Cadets, then served in the United States Army, achieving the rank of colonel; and

WHEREAS, Tom Clemens earned a law degree from Washington and Lee University after only two years, then clerked for a judge in the United States District Court, Western District of Virginia; he subsequently earned a master's degree from Northwestern University on a fellowship from the Ford Foundation; and

WHEREAS, in 1961, Tom Clemens and his wife, Pat, settled in Salem to raise their family; he practiced law with a local firm until he was appointed as a judge of the Salem District Court in the 23rd Judicial District of Virginia in 1979; and

WHEREAS, Tom Clemens was elevated to circuit court judge of the 23rd Judicial Circuit of Virginia in 1985 and presided over the court with great fairness and wisdom until 1997; after his retirement from the bench, he returned to the practice of law with his son, Chris; and

WHEREAS, Tom Clemens inspired young people as a professor of business law at Roanoke College and a longtime member of the Roanoke College Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career, Tom Clemens was a champion for the residents of Salem, supporting several local institutions, civic organizations, and charitable groups; and

WHEREAS, Tom Clemens derived his greatest joy from his beloved family; he relished every opportunity to support his children and grandchildren in all their endeavors and made many lasting memories at the family cabin on Claytor Lake; and

WHEREAS, Tom Clemens will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 64 years, Pat; his children, Cindy, Chris, and Charles, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Gerald O'Neal Clemens; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of the Honorable Gerald O'Neal Clemens as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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