

2025 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 773

Celebrating the life of Jeff Meredith.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 18, 2025

WHEREAS, Jeff Meredith, an acclaimed actor, director, and producer, founder of the Virginia Musical Theatre in Virginia Beach, and beloved member of the Hampton Roads community, died in 2024; and

WHEREAS, born Hugh Washington Williams IV, Jeff Meredith got his first big break as an actor and adopted his stage name at the age of 12, when he played a young Patrick Dennis alongside famed actor Greer Garson in a production of *Auntie Mame*; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from high school at the age of 16 and college three years later, Jeff Meredith earned a master's degree in theater from Virginia Commonwealth University before studying at the Royal Academy of Arts in London on a Ford Foundation grant; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Meredith studied dance and became a skilled tap dancer before setting off for New York, where he landed his first gig on Broadway dancing in a production of *No, No, Nanette*; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Meredith found continued success on Broadway, appearing in productions of *Irene* and *Applause*, yet felt compelled to return to his hometown of Norfolk, where he directed the Tidewater Dinner Theatre for three years; and

WHEREAS, with ambitions to start his own professional musical theater, Jeff Meredith took a job at the Metropolitan Opera in New York to learn the business; soon thereafter, he was working alongside the legendary dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov to promote the American Ballet Theatre's summer tour, which led to a job as an arts marketing manager for the New York City Opera; and

WHEREAS, at the height of his power as a marketing executive in New York City, Jeff Meredith again returned to Hampton Roads to start a musical theater in Virginia Beach, which started as the Commonwealth Musical Stage and is today known as the Virginia Musical Theatre; and

WHEREAS, since its first production in October 1991 to today, Jeff Meredith's Virginia Musical Theater has achieved great renown throughout the Hampton Roads Region by staging world-class Broadway musicals, such as *Annie Get Your Gun*, *South Pacific*, and *The King and I*, to the delight of local audiences; and

WHEREAS, throughout his career, Jeff Meredith was a generous and supportive mentor to countless aspiring actors and theater professionals, making an imprint on the arts culture of the Hampton Roads Region that will be felt for years to come; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Meredith will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by numerous family members, friends, and theatregoers throughout the Hampton Roads Region; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Jeff Meredith, a celebrated actor, director, and producer from Hampton Roads whose legacy on the stage inspired all who knew him; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Jeff Meredith as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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