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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 686

Offered April 1, 2025

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Lawrence L. Koontz, Jr.

Patrons—Suetterlein, Aird, Bagby, Boysko, Carroll Foy, Cifers, Craig, Deeds, DeSteph, Diggs, Durant, Ebbin, Favola, French, Hackworth, Hashmi, Head, Jordan, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, McDougale, McPike, Mulchi, Obenshain, Peake, Pekarsky, Perry, Pillion, Reeves, Roem, Rouse, Salim, Srinivasan, Stanley, Stuart, Sturtevant, Surovell, VanValkenburg and Williams Graves

WHEREAS, the Honorable Lawrence L. Koontz, Jr., a highly respected jurist who served the Commonwealth for more than 15 years as a justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia, died on March 16, 2025, in Salem; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz was born on January 25, 1940, in Roanoke and was a lifelong resident of the Roanoke Valley, where he attended Jefferson High School; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University with a bachelor's degree in biology in 1962, and he received his law degree from the University of Richmond in 1965; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz began his career with the Roanoke law firm Eggleston, Holton, Butler, and Glenn, where he worked with future Governor Linwood Holton and future U.S. Representative M. Caldwell Butler from 1965 to 1967; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz next served as an assistant Commonwealth's attorney in Roanoke until 1968, when he was appointed to the Juvenile Court of the City of Roanoke, later known as the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court for the 23rd Judicial District of Virginia following the reform of the Virginia Court System in 1968; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, Lawrence Koontz was elected by the General Assembly as a judge of the 23rd Judicial Circuit of Virginia, serving the Cities of Roanoke and Salem and Roanoke County; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz was chosen by the General Assembly as an original member of the Virginia Court of Appeals, serving as its second chief judge for two four-year terms following the death of the court's first chief judge a few months after it was created; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz was credited with establishing many of the administrative policies of the Court of Appeals, along with the creation of its own Clerk's Office and Chief Staff Attorney's Office; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, Lawrence Koontz was elected to succeed Justice Henry H. Whiting on the Supreme Court of Virginia; he presided over the court with great fairness and wisdom until February 1, 2011, having reached mandatory retirement age, and then served as a senior justice of the court until December 31, 2024; and

WHEREAS, shortly before his retirement, Lawrence Koontz served as the presiding member of the Supreme Court of Virginia due to the illness of Chief Justice LeRoy R. Hassell, Sr.; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz's judicial career spanned 57 years, including his service in senior status with the Supreme Court of Virginia, one of the longest judicial careers for a jurist in the Commonwealth, second only to that of his friend and mentor, Chief Justice Harry Lee Carrico; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz's collected appellate opinions from his active service on the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court of Virginia have been published as *Jurist Prudent -- The Judicial Opinions of Lawrence L. Koontz, Jr.*, a seven-volume set with the final volume being released in July 2017; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Koontz will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by numerous family members, friends, and colleagues in the legal community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Lawrence L. Koontz, Jr., a distinguished jurist who served the Commonwealth with the utmost integrity, dedication, and distinction; 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 Lawrence L. Koontz, Jr., as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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