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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 42

Offered January 14, 2026

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable Thomas Selby Ellis III.*Patron—Surovell

WHEREAS, the Honorable Thomas Selby Ellis III of Keswick, a respected attorney and longtime judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, died on July 30, 2025; and

WHEREAS, born in Bogotá, Colombia, Thomas “Tim” Ellis spent much of his youth living abroad with his family; he returned to the United States as a teenager and lived in several states before graduating from Greenwich High School in Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, Tim Ellis attended Princeton University on a scholarship from the United States Navy Reserve Officers' Training Corps, then served as a naval aviator from 1961 to 1967; his squadron, the VF-74 “Be-Devilers” was the first to deploy with the iconic F-4 Phantom II fighter-bomber; and

WHEREAS, after his honorable military service, Tim Ellis graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School and was awarded a Knox Fellowship to study in England, where he earned a law diploma from Magdalen College, Oxford; and

WHEREAS, Tim Ellis began his legal career with the firm Hunton and Williams in Richmond; he was renowned as a gifted litigator in complex commercial cases and earned the nickname “Tazmanian Devil” for his unrelenting work ethic and dedication; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, Tim Ellis was appointed by President Ronald Reagan as a judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, known as the “Rocket Docket” for its adjudication rate; and

WHEREAS, Tim Ellis heard countless significant cases over the course of his 38-year career on the federal bench, earning a reputation as a formidable jurist with a strong courtroom presence; he was also well known as a dedicated mentor who helped dozens of law clerks learn and succeed in the legal profession and encouraged attorneys to achieve their fullest potential; and

WHEREAS, Tim Ellis proudly presided over countless naturalization ceremonies, believing that the pursuit of citizenship represented the highest ideals of the American dream; he especially enjoyed learning words of welcome in other languages to offer to attendees; and

WHEREAS, Tim Ellis will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife of 30 years, Rebecca; his sons, Alexander and Parrish, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; 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 the Honorable Thomas Selby Ellis III, an esteemed jurist who served on the federal bench for nearly four decades; 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 Thomas Selby Ellis III as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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