

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19

Commemorating the life and legacy of Gene Vincent.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 5, 2026
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 9, 2026

WHEREAS, Vincent Eugene Craddock, known internationally by his stage name Gene Vincent, helped reshape the American musical landscape in the 1950s through his contributions to early rock and roll music; and

WHEREAS, Vincent Craddock was born in 1935 to Mary Louise and Ezekiah Jackson Craddock and grew up in Princess Anne County's Munden Point neighborhood, a diverse and culturally mixed community, where his parents ran a general store; and

WHEREAS, at age 12, Vincent Craddock received a guitar from a friend and began to develop his distinctive musical style; he was heavily influenced by country, blues, and gospel music, as well as classical composers such as Beethoven, and he was often mentored by a cherished neighbor, Cleon Hoggard; and

WHEREAS, Vincent Craddock left school at age 17 to enlist in the United States Navy and served as a crew member aboard the USS *Chukawan* during the Korean War before returning home aboard the USS *Wisconsin*; and

WHEREAS, in 1955, after returning to the Commonwealth, Vincent Craddock was critically injured in an automobile crash, which left him with chronic pain and a permanent metal brace in one leg, ultimately leading to his honorable discharge from the United States Navy; and

WHEREAS, Vincent Craddock subsequently entered the local music scene and adopted the stage name Gene Vincent; despite his physical limitations, he formed a groundbreaking rockabilly band, Gene Vincent and His Blue Caps, which included several talented teenage musicians from Portsmouth; and

WHEREAS, in 1956, Gene Vincent wrote and recorded "Be-Bop-A-Lula," which helped him secure a contract from Capitol Records and launched his career as an international musical phenomenon and one of the defining pioneers of early rock and roll; and

WHEREAS, Gene Vincent followed up on that initial success with the release of his debut studio album *Bluejean Bop!* and several other popular songs he wrote or recorded, including "Woman Love," "Race with the Devil," "Blue Jean Bop," "Lotta Lovin'," and "Dance to the Bop," solidifying his reputation as a dynamic and innovative artist whose music shaped generations to come; and

WHEREAS, Gene Vincent's work profoundly influenced many of the world's most celebrated musicians, including members of The Beatles, who admired his artistry and recognized his importance in the evolution of modern popular music; and

WHEREAS, Gene Vincent continued to perform and record throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, Japan, and Australia, bringing his groundbreaking sound to global audiences and leaving a lasting mark on international music culture, until his death at age 36 in 1971; and

WHEREAS, Gene Vincent inspired generations of rock and roll artists, and "Be-Bop-A-Lula" has been covered by some of the biggest names in the music industry, including Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, John Lennon, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Freddie Mercury, Tom Jones, Stray Cats, The Everly Brothers, and Mark Knopfler, demonstrating the enduring cultural resonance of his work; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his achievements, Gene Vincent became the first inductee of the Rockabilly Hall of Fame after it was established in 1997 and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame by John Fogerty in 1998; his contributions have also been celebrated in the Virginia Musical Museum's exhibit on Virginia music artists; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Gene Vincent received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and a bronze star on Norfolk's Legends of Music Walk of Fame; and

WHEREAS, through his groundbreaking contributions to American music and global culture, Gene Vincent remains one of the Commonwealth's most influential and enduring musical icons; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the life and legacy of Gene Vincent on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of his passing; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare six copies of this resolution for presentation to Gene Vincent's daughter, Sherri Vincent, for distribution to his daughter, Melody Jean Vincent, as well as his grandchildren through his late son, Vincent Eugene Craddock, Jr., Chantiel Craddock, Vincent Craddock, Olivia McCulloch, and Zachary Craddock, as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for Gene Vincent's memory and admiration for his exceptional career and contributions to popular

music around the world.