

2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 43

Celebrating the life of Charles Whitley Henderson.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 12, 2026

WHEREAS, Charles Whitley Henderson, a respected entrepreneur in Abingdon who grew the Food Country USA grocery stores into a multistate chain and became a titan in professional stock car racing and led Henderson Motorsports for many years, died on June 14, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Charles “Charlie” Henderson grew up in the Hayter's Gap community of Meadowview and graduated from Meadowview High School, where he excelled in football and baseball, then continued his education at East Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Henderson participated in the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps program in college and was commissioned as an officer in the United States Army after graduation; he completed postings at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Fort Bliss, Texas, and Incheon, South Korea, where he served as a military police officer; and

WHEREAS, after his honorable discharge, Charlie Henderson settled in Abingdon and opened the Minute-ette grocery store on Main Street; he ultimately grew the business into a successful regional chain, Food Country USA, with 10 locations in Virginia and Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Charlie Henderson founded Henderson Motorsports, a well-known stock car racing team that has competed in multiple National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) series races, including the NASCAR Cup Series, the NASCAR Xfinity Series, and the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Henderson was known for his unwavering dedication to his drivers, crews, and staff and earned the respect of teammates and competitors alike for his quiet determination and steady leadership; with more than 40 years in the sport, he became the second-longest tenured team owner in NASCAR; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career, Charlie Henderson was passionate about community engagement and enhancing the quality of life in the region; he was a devoted supporter of local schools, veterans' groups, and faith-based organizations throughout Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Charlie Henderson will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his beloved wife of 62 years, Brenda; his children, Don and Debbie, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Charles Whitley Henderson, a visionary entrepreneur and a leader in the world of professional stock car racing; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Charles Whitley Henderson as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

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