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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 156

Offered March 3, 2026

*Celebrating the life of Christian A. Jurgensen III.*

Patron—Surovell

WHEREAS, Christian A. Jurgensen III, a former quarterback for the Washington Commanders, who was respected throughout the National Football League as one of the greatest passers in the game, died on February 6, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Christian Jurgensen grew up in North Carolina, where he earned the nickname “Sonny” from his parents for his sunny disposition; he began learning to play football by playing catch with his mother in the front yard and was a talented multisport athlete in high school; and

WHEREAS, Sonny Jurgensen attended Duke University on an athletic scholarship and joined the football team as a defensive back and backup quarterback, then took over as starting quarterback for his junior and senior seasons; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Sonny Jurgensen was selected by the Philadelphia Eagles in the fourth round of the National Football League (NFL) Draft; he served as a backup quarterback for three years, including during the 1960 season when Philadelphia won the NFL Championship, the precursor to the Super Bowl; and

WHEREAS, during his first season as starting quarterback for the Philadelphia Eagles, Sonny Jurgensen passed for 3,723 yards, a new NFL record, and 32 touchdowns, which matched the league record at the time; and

WHEREAS, prior to the 1964 season, Sonny Jurgensen was traded to the Washington Commanders, then known as the Washington Redskins; over the next 11 seasons, he became a fan favorite and a franchise icon, who is remembered as one of the best pure passers in the history of professional football; and

WHEREAS, Sonny Jurgensen was known for his mobility in the pocket, situational awareness, and most of all for his ability to complete passes with extraordinary precision; his wide receivers admired his ability to control the speed of the ball and deliver passes anywhere on the field, even in tight coverage; and

WHEREAS, Sonny Jurgensen had one of his best seasons in 1967, when he threw for 31 touchdowns and helped the offense put 347 total points on the board; that season, he set league records for passing attempts with 508, completions with 288, and passing yards with 3,747; and

WHEREAS, during the 1969 season, Sonny Jurgensen led the Washington Commanders to their first winning season in 14 years; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his career, Sonny Jurgensen was a five-time Pro Bowl selection, who threw for 255 touchdowns and led the league in passing yards five times and passing touchdowns twice; upon his retirement in 1974, his 57.1 completion percentage was the highest in NFL history, and his 82.62 career passer rating is the highest for any player active during the “dead ball era,” when low-scoring, run-heavy offenses were popular; and

WHEREAS, Sonny Jurgensen subsequently built a successful career as a sports broadcaster on Washington, D.C., radio and television stations; he developed a strong rapport with his former teammate Sam Huff, veteran sportscaster Frank Herzog, and play-by-play announcer Larry Michael over the years, delighting fans with his insightful commentary and analysis until his retirement in 2019 at the age of 85; and

WHEREAS, in 1983, Sonny Jurgensen was honored as one of only two Washington Commanders quarterbacks inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Sonny Jurgensen will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Margo; his sons, Greg, Scott, Erik, and Gunnar, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and generations of Washington Commanders fans; 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 Christian A. Jurgensen III, an iconic quarterback for the Washington Commanders; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Christian A. Jurgensen III as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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