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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 170

Offered March 4, 2026

Commending WRVA.

Patron—VanValkenburg

WHEREAS, for the past century, WRVA, an AM broadcast that is one of the oldest radio stations in the Commonwealth, has greatly served the Greater Richmond community; and

WHEREAS, in April 1925, Pleasant Larus Reed, vice president of Larus and Brother Company, resolved to bring the miracle of radio to Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Pleasant Larus Reed ordered a 1,000-watt Western Electric radio station and directed his administrative assistant Calvin T. Lucy to oversee its assembly atop the Larus Building on East Main Street and its operation; and

WHEREAS, the entire front page of the October 31, 1925, edition of the *Richmond News Leader* was devoted to articles anticipating the initial broadcast of the city's first radio station; and

WHEREAS, at 9:00 p.m. on November 2, 1925, studio director Elmer Hoelzel began WRVA's now 100 years of broadcasting by stating, "Radio world, this is the opening night of station WRVA"; and

WHEREAS, WRVA's inaugural broadcast included a prayer by the Reverend W. Taliaferro Thompson of Union Theological Seminary; remarks from Governor E. Lee Trinkle and Richmond Mayor J. Fulmer Bright; and musical selections performed by the Jefferson Hotel Orchestra, the Old South Negro Quartet, and other artists; and

WHEREAS, during its first year of operation, WRVA's twice-a-week schedule expanded to include 242 programs, with 2,358 people speaking, singing, or otherwise appearing before WRVA microphones; and

WHEREAS, WRVA subsequently produced programs that developed regional and national audiences, including the Corn Cob Pipe Club, Aunt Sammy, and the Old Dominion Barn Dance; and

WHEREAS, WRVA, on February 1, 1926, demonstrated its commitment to connecting Virginians with their government by broadcasting the inauguration of Governor Harry F. Byrd and his subsequent address to the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, WRVA's studios were moved in 1933 to the mezzanine of the Hotel Richmond opposite the State Capitol, and, with the installation of a 50,000-watt transmitter in Varina, WRVA truly became the "Voice of Virginia"; and

WHEREAS, millions of Virginians experienced the stirring events of the 20th century, including the Great Depression, World War II, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, by listening to WRVA; and

WHEREAS, more recently, generations of Virginians were entertained and informed by listening to WRVA personalities, journalists, and characters, including Alden Aaroe, Lou Dean, Dick Hemby, "Big John" Trimble, Larry Dodd, John Harding, Tim Timberlake, The Capitol Squirrel, and Millard the Mallard; and

WHEREAS, WRVA earned multiple awards for public service broadcasting and journalism from the Virginias Associated Press Broadcasters, the Radio-Television News Directors Association, and the Virginia Association of Broadcasters; and

WHEREAS, WRVA's commitment to excellence in broadcasting and public service continues today through thought-provoking programming and news coverage and community outreach; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend WRVA and its employees both past and present for a century of service to the Commonwealth and its citizens as the "Voice of Virginia"; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to representatives of WRVA as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the station's exceptional contributions and continuing service to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

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