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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 235

Offered March 9, 2026

*Celebrating the life of Joseph C. Ritchie.*

Patrons—Diggs; Delegate: Simonds

WHEREAS, Joseph C. Ritchie, a dedicated public servant and respected local leader who left a legacy of excellence to the City of Newport News through his commitment to economic growth, died on August 17, 2025; and

WHEREAS, Joseph “Joe” Ritchie grew up in Newport News and graduated from Newport News High School; he continued his education in various apprenticeships and extension school programs, then served the nation as an active-duty member of the United States Marine Corps during the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, Joe Ritchie worked for Newport News Shipbuilding in piping design and for Dow Chemical Company in project engineering before establishing the Ritchie-Curbow Construction Company; and

WHEREAS, Joe Ritchie guided a wide range of construction and development projects in Newport News, and he provided his leadership and expertise to many other organizations, including the executive committee of the Virginia Peninsula Economic Development Board, the Virginia Company Bank, Bon Secours Mary Immaculate Hospital, Newport News-Williamsburg International Airport, and the Virginia Aviation Board; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service, Joe Ritchie ran for and was elected to the Newport News City Council and served four terms beginning in 1970; he was a trusted voice in municipal government and was elected by his fellow councilmembers to serve as mayor from 1976 to 1986; and

WHEREAS, Joe Ritchie made history as the first Republican elected to the Newport News City Council and the first Republican elected as mayor; during his long tenure in public office, he guided the city through a period of significant growth, infrastructure development, and civic progress, enhancing the quality of life for countless local residents over the years; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, Joe Ritchie played an important role in the creation of City Center at Oyster Point, a successful mixed-use district, and he was instrumental in the development of the Army & Air Force Exchange Service at Oakland Industrial Park and the Canon Virginia facility in Newport News; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his many years in business and public service, Joe Ritchie was highly admired for his integrity, steady leadership, and unwavering dedication to serving the residents of Newport News; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career, Joe Ritchie enjoyed traveling, boating, and golfing, and he was a proud member of the James River Country Club, the Kingsmill Golf Association, and the Hilton Head Golf Club; and

WHEREAS, Joe Ritchie will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his beloved wife of 36 years, Kathleen; his children, Joseph, Jr., and Joanne, 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 Joseph C. Ritchie, a respected public servant and a pillar of the community in Newport News; and, be it

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

INTRODUCED

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