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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 236

Offered March 9, 2026

*Celebrating the life of Ronyell Deshawn Whitaker.*

Patrons—Rouse, Aird, Bagby, Bennett-Parker, Boysko, Carroll Foy, Cifers, Craig, Deeds, DeSteph, Diggs, Durant, Favola, French, Hackworth, Head, Jones, Jordan, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, McDougle, McPike, Mulchi, Obenshain, Peake, Pekarsky, Perry, Pillion, Reeves, Roem, Salim, Srinivasan, Stanley, Stuart, Sturtevant, Suetterlein, Surovell, VanValkenburg and Williams Graves

WHEREAS, Ronyell Deshawn Whitaker, a devoted son and brother, generous mentor, and beloved member of the Norfolk community, whose career as a defensive back in the National Football League brought great pride to Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth, died on February 22, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Ronyell Whitaker was a standout on the football team at Lake Taylor High School in Norfolk and went on to play for the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University football team before being signed by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the National Football League (NFL) in 2003; and

WHEREAS, in addition to Tampa Bay, Ronyell Whitaker's professional career included stints with the NFL's Minnesota Vikings and Detroit Lions, as well as time in NFL Europe and with the Canadian Football League's Winnipeg Blue Bombers before he retired in 2009; and

WHEREAS, Ronyell Whitaker channeled his passion for football into an opportunity to mentor young people and contribute to their success, serving as the defensive backs coach at Chanhassen High School in Minnesota from 2014 to 2018; and

WHEREAS, later in his career, Ronyell Whitaker dedicated his time as the chief executive officer and owner of Whitaker Group, LLC, a real estate services firm focused on relocation transactions and short sales; and

WHEREAS, Ronyell Whitaker will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by numerous family members, friends and football fans throughout Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth; 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 Ronyell Deshawn Whitaker, a revered member of the Norfolk community whose legacy of love, kindness, and generosity will forever inspire all who knew him; and, be it

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

INTRODUCED

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