

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 173

Commending Chester and Barbara Ehrenzeller.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 5, 2026
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 9, 2026

WHEREAS, for 50 years, Chester and Barbara Ehrenzeller have helped preserve the history of the Commonwealth as the owners of Broad Bay Manor, which is considered one of the oldest European-built houses in the country; and

WHEREAS, Broad Bay Manor traces its origins to when Thomas Allen, an English trader, received 550 acres of land in what was then Elizabeth City County; he is believed to have built the original house, a one-room, loft-style structure of Flemish bond brick, which was typical for the time period, in 1640; and

WHEREAS, the Cornick family acquired Broad Bay Manor in the late 17th century and constructed a Georgian-style addition to the home around 1770; three generations of Cornicks owned the property until it was purchased by William Dozier of North Carolina in 1847; and

WHEREAS, Enoch D. Ferebee bought Broad Bay Manor from Willoughby Dozier, the son of William Dozier, in 1856, and three generations of Ferebees lived there until 1907; the property changed owners several times between 1907 and 1914, when it was acquired at auction by the Honorable John B. Dey, a former member of the Princess Anne County Board of Supervisors, the Norfolk City Council, and the House of Delegates; and

WHEREAS, John Dey conducted major renovations to Broad Bay Manor, including re-plastering throughout the home and the addition of plumbing and a central coal-fired heating system; he also added a small, two-story addition consisting of a kitchen, bathroom, and library area, and added a sunroom to the original structure; and

WHEREAS, the Dey family operated a 500-acre vegetable farm for many years, but the barns and other outbuildings were ultimately destroyed after the family retired from farming; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, Chester "Chet" and Barbara "Babs" Ehrenzeller purchased the home from John Dey's son, Furman Dey, and learned much of the house's august history after developing a fond friendship with him; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Chet and Babs Ehrenzeller built another addition to the house and a brick wall surrounding the property; they also recently completed an addition to house their personal antique collections; and

WHEREAS, Chet and Babs Ehrenzeller have preserved stories of Broad Bay Manor's previous owners and have promoted the house as one of the oldest continuously inhabited homes in the United States; and

WHEREAS, on July 4, 2026, Chet and Babs Ehrenzeller will commemorate their 50 years of ownership of Broad Bay Manor, along with the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Chester and Barbara Ehrenzeller on the occasion of their 50th anniversary as owners of Broad Bay Manor in Virginia Beach; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Chester and Barbara Ehrenzeller as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for their contributions to the legacy of Broad Bay Manor, one of the oldest homes in the Commonwealth.

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