

2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 57

Celebrating the life of Earl Cole.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 26, 2026
Agreed to by the Senate, January 29, 2026

WHEREAS, Earl Cole, an esteemed faith leader, accomplished businessman across a variety of ventures, distinguished civic leader, beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and cherished member of the Whitewood community in Buchanan County, died on July 25, 2025; and

WHEREAS, born in Richlands, Earl Cole was guided throughout his life by his faith and began preaching by the age of 11, earning him the affectionate nickname, “the boy preacher”; and

WHEREAS, Earl Cole founded The Shelter Free Will Baptist Church in Whitewood in 1974 and devoted himself to providing his congregation with uplifting and inspirational spiritual guidance and support; and

WHEREAS, Earl Cole displayed an entrepreneurial spirit from a young age and found success owning a coal trucking business and a rest home for elderly and disabled adults before establishing The Golden Coach steak house, which he grew to five locations; and

WHEREAS, Earl Cole contributed greatly to civic discourse in Buchanan and Tazewell Counties as the founder and publisher of *The Voice* newspaper and as the longtime host of the local radio show *County Talk*; and

WHEREAS, preceded in death by his son, Ricky, Earl Cole will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his loving wife of 60 years; his children, Christine, Harold, and Hayden, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Earl Cole, a treasured member of the Whitewood community whose faith, kindness, and generosity touched countless lives; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Earl Cole as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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