

2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 360

Celebrating the life of John Philip Robbins.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 10, 2026

WHEREAS, John Philip Robbins, an esteemed high school football and track and field coach who inspired generations of young athletes and promoted student-athletics throughout the Southwest Virginia Region, died on September 21, 2025; and

WHEREAS, John Philip “Phil” Robbins grew up in Tennessee, where he was a talented multisport athlete from a young age and was the star quarterback on the McMinn County High School football team; and

WHEREAS, Phil Robbins played baseball and was a three-year letterman in football at Emory & Henry University, from which he earned a bachelor's degree; he continued his education by earning a master's degree in education from the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Phil Robbins worked as an assistant football coach at Patrick Henry High School in Glade Spring for four years, then began serving as the head football and track and field coach at John S. Battle High School in 1971; and

WHEREAS, from 1977 to 1982, Phil Robbins served as head coach of the football team at Christiansburg High School, leading the team to its first-ever playoff berth in 1981; and

WHEREAS, Phil Robbins joined Powell Valley High School in 1982 and led the school to new heights of athletic success over the course of his 28-year tenure as a coach; he helped the track and field team win two regional titles and two state titles and the football team win 15 district titles, 15 regional titles, and seven state titles in eight state championship appearances; and

WHEREAS, Phil Robbins amassed an impressive 268–81 record at Powell Valley High School and finished his career as one of the winningest football coaches in Virginia High School League (VHSL) history; and

WHEREAS, after Powell Valley High School closed in 2010, Phil Robbins worked as equipment manager, then chief of staff for the football program at the University of Virginia's College at Wise; and

WHEREAS, Phil Robbins was a trusted mentor who inspired a deeper love of football in countless student-athletes; many of his players went on to succeed in professional football or serve as football coaches at the high school or collegiate levels; and

WHEREAS, as president of the Virginia High School Coaches Association, Phil Robbins promoted high school athletics across the Commonwealth and worked diligently to bring recognition to players and teams from Southwest Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Phil Robbins was inducted into the VHSL's Virginia High School Hall of Fame in 1997 and the Emory & Henry Sports Hall of Fame in 2001; and

WHEREAS, outside of his career in school athletics, Phil Robbins was a devoted community leader who served on the Big Stone Gap Town Council and supported a wide range of civic organizations; he led the Union Bears Backpack Program at Union Primary School, which creates bags of nutritious food for students in need to take home over the weekend or during holidays; and

WHEREAS, a man of deep and abiding faith, Phil Robbins was an active member of Trinity United Methodist Church in Big Stone Gap, where he provided his insightful leadership to several church committees and boards; and

WHEREAS, Phil Robbins will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his loving wife of 58 years, Patty; his sons, Andy, Wes, and Brad, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of John Philip Robbins, a highly admired coach who touched the lives of countless student-athletes throughout the Southwest Virginia Region; 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 John Philip Robbins as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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