ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 424

Celebrating the life of Lieutenant General William Morgan Keys, USMC, Ret.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 13, 2026

WHEREAS, Lieutenant General William Morgan Keys, USMC, Ret., a distinguished veteran who served the nation for 34 years, demonstrating meritorious leadership in combat during the Vietnam War and Operation Desert Storm, died on January 24, 2026; and

WHEREAS, a native of Fredericktown, Pennsylvania, William Keys graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1960 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps; he served as a rifle platoon leader, then commanded a Marine detachment aboard the USS *Long Beach*; and

WHEREAS, during the Vietnam War, William Keys served as commander of Company D, First Battalion, Ninth Marines, Third Marine Division and earned the Navy Cross and the Silver Star for his heroism under fire and conspicuous gallantry; and

WHEREAS, William Keys earned the Navy Cross in March 1967 when his unit encountered a numerically superior force of North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong soldiers during a search and destroy mission as part of Operation Prairie II; during the battle, he organized his command post into an assault element and destroyed the enemy machine gun position, directed deployment of the company during a series of wave attacks, then overran the enemy camp before they could withdraw; and

WHEREAS, a few days later, while still supporting Operation Prairie II, William Keys further demonstrated his bold, aggressive leadership when Company D came under intense enemy fire on a patrol; he rushed to a vantage point to direct all available fire on the enemy force, then fearlessly led an assault on the enemy position, resulting in hand-to-hand combat in dense underbrush; and

WHEREAS, William Keys served a second tour in Vietnam as an advisor to the Republic of Vietnam Marine Division from 1972 to 1973, for which he earned the Legion of Merit; and

WHEREAS, after the Vietnam War, William Keys was selected to attend the National War College in Washington, D.C., then took command of Third Battalion, Fifth Marines; he held several staff positions in Washington, D.C., before serving as commanding officer of the Sixth Marine Regiment at Camp Lejeune in 1983; and

WHEREAS, upon his promotion to major general, William Keys was assigned as commanding general of the Second Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, in 1989; he led the division during its successful crossing of the Kuwaiti border during Operation Desert Storm, breaching Iraqi barriers and minefields to help liberate Kuwait City; and

WHEREAS, William Keys retired in 1994 as commanding general of II Marine Expeditionary Force and Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic, which is now known as United States Marine Corps Forces Command; and

WHEREAS, following his honorable military service, William Keys joined Colt's Manufacturing Company as a member of the board, then was elevated to president and chief executive officer; he helped the company avert an impending bankruptcy by negotiating a sole-source government contract for the M4 carbine, and he guided the development of the M45A1 pistol used for many years by members of United States Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance and Marine Forces Special Operations Command; and

WHEREAS, William Keys will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by numerous family members, friends, and fellow Marines; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Lieutenant General William Morgan Keys, USMC, Ret., a decorated veteran who served the nation with honor and distinction; 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 Lieutenant General William Morgan Keys, USMC, Ret., as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.