

# 2026 SPECIAL SESSION I

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## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 2012

*Celebrating the life of the Honorable Marian Van Landingham.*

Agreed to by the Senate, April 23, 2026

WHEREAS, the Honorable Marian Van Landingham, a respected public servant, devoted community leader, and passionate artist who reshaped cultural life in Alexandria through her visionary contributions to the establishment of the Torpedo Factory Art Center, died on April 4, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Marian Van Landingham grew up in Albany, Georgia, and received bachelor's and master's degrees from Emory University in Atlanta; she also pursued formal education in the fine arts at the Art Institute of Atlanta; and

WHEREAS, Marian Van Landingham began her career in public relations with Emory University and the Georgia Institute of Technology, then moved to Washington, D.C., where she worked for federal agencies and served as a press aide and speechwriter for a member of the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, in the 1960s, Marian Van Landingham settled in Northern Virginia, first in Shirlington, then in Alexandria; she quickly became a pivotal member of Alexandria's emerging arts community as president of the Art League; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, amid efforts to develop a larger home for the Art League, Marian Van Landingham saw an opportunity to transform the former torpedo plant on Alexandria's waterfront into a working arts center, where visitors could gain a greater appreciation for the arts by watching painters, sculptors, printmakers, and craftspeople hone their talents; and

WHEREAS, Marian Van Landingham worked with city officials and the Alexandria Bicentennial Commission to secure funding for the project, then led a team of fellow artists to revitalize the property, demonstrating her unwavering commitment to the endeavor by personally helping to clear debris, paint, fix leaks in the roof, and improvise creative solutions to the challenges of cleaning and renovating the long-abandoned space; and

WHEREAS, through Marian Van Landingham's diligence, persistence, and hard work, the Torpedo Factory Art Center officially opened on September 15, 1974; the center has become not only the cultural heart of Alexandria, spurring new development and a stronger sense of community along the Alexandria Waterfront, but one of the most respected working arts centers in the country, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors every year and serving as a national model for arts-driven urban revitalization; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Marian Van Landingham began serving as the founding director of the Alexandria Volunteer Bureau, now known as Volunteer Alexandria, further reflecting her lifelong commitment to civic engagement and service to others; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Marian Van Landingham ran for and was elected to the House of Delegates, representing the residents of Alexandria and surrounding communities in the 45th District; and

WHEREAS, over the course of her 24-year tenure as a state lawmaker, Marian Van Landingham introduced and supported many important pieces of legislation to enhance the quality of life for her constituents and benefit all Virginians; and

WHEREAS, Marian Van Landingham served as the first female chair of the Privileges and Elections Committee and was an active member of the Appropriations Committee, where she advocated for increased funding to support public education, mental health services, Medicaid, child care, services for older Virginians and the unhoused, and community-based initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Marian Van Landingham retired from public office in 2005 as the most senior female member of the House of Delegates; in later life, she remained active in civic affairs and continued to serve as a champion for working artists at the Torpedo Factory Arts Center, where she was highly admired as a prolific painter and a trusted friend; and

WHEREAS, Marian Van Landingham earned countless awards and accolades for her professional achievements, including the 1974 Washingtonian of the Year award and the 2024 Bernard "Ben" Brenman Archaeology in Alexandria Award; she was also selected as a Living Legend of Alexandria and as one of the Library of Virginia's Virginia Women in History honorees; and

WHEREAS, Marian Van Landingham will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by numerous family members, friends, and residents of Alexandria who benefited from her generosity and devotion to servant leadership; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of the Honorable Marian Van Landingham, a pillar of the Alexandria community who dedicated her life to public service and the advancement of the fine arts; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to

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the family of the Honorable Marian Van Landingham as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for her memory.