

2026 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 2034

Celebrating the life of Christopher Lansing Yates.

Agreed to by the Senate, June 22, 2026

WHEREAS, Christopher Lansing Yates of Richmond, an inspirational community activist who touched countless lives through his support for young people, dedication to preserving democratic ideals, and unwavering commitment to servant leadership, died on May 15, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Christopher “Chris” Yates grew up in Huntsville, Alabama, and came to the Commonwealth to pursue higher education at Hampden-Sydney College, where he played on the golf team, and began to cultivate his lifelong passion for activism, winning the Commander Robert Weed Memorial Award for his work to establish the outreach program Students for Community Service; and

WHEREAS, Chris Yates was an avid bicyclist, and after graduating from college, he traveled throughout Europe, then cycled from Los Angeles to Seattle and east across Canada before returning to Virginia, where he began working with at-risk youths at the New Dominion School in Dillwyn in 1976; and

WHEREAS, Chris Yates founded the Discovery School of Virginia in 1998 and served as its executive director until his retirement in 2014; during that period, he also volunteered with Piedmont Habitat for Humanity and co-founded the Little Learners Tri-County Preschool at St. Anne's Episcopal Parish, providing the Scottsville community with its only accredited early childhood education center at the time; and

WHEREAS, after retirement, Chris Yates settled in Richmond and became an active member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, through which he began volunteering with the Woodville Elementary Communities in Schools program; he also mentored young people through the Armstrong Leadership Program and volunteered at Richmond Hill; and

WHEREAS, in December 2024, Chris Yates joined RVA Indivisible, a grassroots organization promoting civic change, equality, inclusion, and democracy in the Commonwealth and throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, Chris Yates was highly admired as a passionate and driven activist, who was not only skilled at organizing and leading demonstrations, but went above and beyond to engage with his fellow participants on a personal level; and

WHEREAS, Chris Yates inspired others through his unfailing kindness and determination to strengthen the Richmond community, the Commonwealth, and the United States by supporting the mission of RVA Indivisible; and

WHEREAS, Chris Yates will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Denise; his children, Amanda and Charles, and their families; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of Virginia hereby note with great sadness the loss of Christopher Lansing Yates, a highly admired community leader and activist in Richmond; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Christopher Lansing Yates as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's respect for his memory.

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