

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1048

Celebrating the life of Josiah Pollard Rowe III.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 19, 2019
Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2019

WHEREAS, Josiah Pollard Rowe III, the esteemed former publisher of *The Free Lance-Star*, former Fredericksburg mayor, and a passionate advocate for the environment, died on November 3, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Josiah Rowe was born and raised in Fredericksburg; he graduated from James Monroe High School and Washington and Lee University, where he studied physics and mathematics; and

WHEREAS, Josiah Rowe was inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa, a national leadership honor society, and was a member of Delta Tau Delta Fraternity; he studied printing management at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and from 1951 to 1953 he served in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, when Josiah Rowe's father died in 1949, Josiah and his brother Charles were called on to manage *The Free Lance-Star*; under the brothers' leadership, the newspaper rose from a circulation of about 6,000 subscribers to a high of 50,000 subscribers as a seven-day newspaper, and the business was expanded to include WFLS, WYSK, WWUZ, Print Innovators, and fredericksburg.com; and

WHEREAS, Josiah Rowe always kept an eye on details, reading the newspaper every day with a red pen in hand to catch mistakes; he was also an early adopter of new technology; and

WHEREAS, Josiah and Charles Rowe received national recognition in 1986 when *Time* magazine named *The Free Lance-Star* as one of the nation's best newspapers for its size; the publication prided itself on being the primary source for news for the Fredericksburg region, giving readers little reason to subscribe to larger papers in Washington, D.C., or Richmond; and

WHEREAS, under Josiah and Charles Rowe's leadership, *The Free Lance-Star* paid journalists enough to make their careers there and raise families; the brothers were not afraid to take bold, even unpopular stances in the newspaper when they believed those positions were ethical, just, and correct; and

WHEREAS, as Mayor of Fredericksburg from 1964 to 1972, Josiah Rowe helped lead the peaceful integration of schools and the city's workforce in Fredericksburg; he purposefully marched in solidarity with city residents mourning the death of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, and he made the trailblazing move for the city to acquire the land around the Rappahannock River to preserve the natural resource and the city's drinking water source; and

WHEREAS, Josiah Rowe followed in a long family tradition of public service, with his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all having previously held the office of Fredericksburg mayor; Josiah Rowe also served on the Fredericksburg school board in the paradigm-shifting time after Brown v. Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, Josiah Rowe volunteered his leadership to many other organizations, including as president of the Virginia Press Association, chair of Presbyterian School of Christian Education, trustee of the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, chair of Mary Washington Hospital, trustee and treasurer of the George Washington Foundation, member of the Fredericksburg Jaycees, chair of the Community Fund, and longtime member of the Fredericksburg Rotary Club; and

WHEREAS, for excellence in his profession, Josiah Rowe received awards from the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame and AP Broadcasters' Hall of Fame; *The Free Lance-Star* received awards from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism and the University of Missouri; and

WHEREAS, Josiah Rowe was a passionate tennis player who reigned as city tennis champion for several decades and did not retire from the sport until well into his 80s; his love of tennis and his generosity prompted him to donate funds to build indoor courts at the University of Mary Washington and the Massad Branch of the Rappahannock Area YMCA; he was known for his enjoyment of puns and trivia, his dry wit, and his keen memory and could recite a linotype keyboard horizontally and vertically; and

WHEREAS, Josiah Rowe and his late wife, Anne Wilson Rowe, were generous philanthropists and contributed to institutions that reflected their interest in higher education, history, faith, and community; genealogy was of great interest to Josiah Rowe, who traced his family's origins to Stafford County's first peoples, leading him to join the Patowomeck Indian Tribe; and

WHEREAS, predeceased by his wife, Anne, Josiah Rowe will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his children, Jeannette, Florence, Sallie, and Josiah, 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 Josiah Pollard Rowe III, an esteemed newspaper publisher, former

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Fredericksburg mayor, and environmental advocate; 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 Josiah Pollard Rowe III as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory as a champion for Fredericksburg, journalism, athletics, and the environment.