

# 2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

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## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 650

Offered May 13, 2024

Prefiled May 13, 2024

*Celebrating the life of Daniel Porter Jordan, Jr.*

Patrons—Carr, Callsen, Laufer, Ware and Willett

WHEREAS, Daniel Porter Jordan, Jr., a preeminent historian who made invaluable contributions to the Commonwealth as executive director of Monticello and president of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, died on March 21, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Daniel "Dan" Porter Jordan, Jr., grew up in Philadelphia, Mississippi, and was a standout basketball player at Philadelphia High School; he continued playing basketball at the University of Mississippi where he also excelled at baseball, pitching during consecutive Southeastern Conference championship runs in 1959 and 1960; and

WHEREAS, at the time, the baseball team was prohibited by the governor of Mississippi from playing against integrated schools, and, despite Dan Jordan's personal appeal to the governor, the team did not participate in the National Collegiate Athletics Association tournament; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his success in athletics, Dan Jordan was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity, participated in the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and was elected as student body president; he was later inducted into the University of Mississippi Hall of Fame and its Alumni Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, after receiving bachelor's and master's degrees in history, Dan Jordan served his country as an officer in the United States Army and deployed to South Korea, where he taught American history through an overseas program affiliated with the University of Maryland; and

WHEREAS, Dan Jordan completed additional postings in Europe before returning to the United States to earn a doctorate in American history from the University of Virginia, where he was inducted into the Raven Society; and

WHEREAS, Dan Jordan began teaching at the University of Richmond, then joined Virginia Commonwealth University, where he achieved tenure, became the chair of the History Department, and was twice recognized as professor of the year; he was a sought-after speaker on a variety of historical topics and published dozens of articles and three books, including *Political Leadership in Jefferson's Virginia*; and

WHEREAS, Dan Jordan was already well-known as an expert in Virginia and American history when he was selected in 1985 as the president of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, the nonprofit organization responsible for the care and maintenance of Thomas Jefferson's former home, Monticello; and

WHEREAS, Dan Jordan oversaw major preservation, restoration, and expansion projects, while renewing Monticello's emphasis on scholarship and education, transforming the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and Monticello itself by working closely with staff members and stakeholders to develop a forward-thinking strategic plan; and

WHEREAS, two years after joining the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Dan Jordan oversaw the designation of both Monticello and the University of Virginia as UNESCO World Heritage Sites; he raised the prestige of Monticello at the national and international levels without diminishing its role as one of the region's most significant tourism destinations; and

WHEREAS, Dan Jordan was a trusted mentor to the staff members and volunteers at Monticello, and he was highly admired as a true gentleman who was equally suited to welcoming dignitaries as he was to giving personal tours to everyday visitors; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the critical importance of fundraising, Dan Jordan took the time to engage with individual donors through handwritten letters and pursued innovative programs like working with the U.S. Mint to release a commemorative coin for the 250th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth; his efforts helped Monticello grow its endowment to \$120 million by the time of his retirement in 2008; and

WHEREAS, under Dan Jordan's leadership, Monticello restored its historic vineyard and road system, opened the Jefferson Library, protected views of the Blue Ridge Mountains by acquiring the nearby Montalto Mountain, and enhanced opportunities for outdoor recreation by opening a hiking and biking trail on the Thomas Jefferson Parkway; and

WHEREAS, Dan Jordan notably enhanced the discussion of slavery and race in Monticello's programs, and when a scientific journal presented evidence of a relationship between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, an enslaved woman at Monticello, he proactively formed a research panel to address

INTRODUCED

HR650

59 the issue and ensure that Monticello continued to provide a complete and accurate interpretation of  
60 Jefferson's life; and

61 WHEREAS, outside of his distinguished tenure at Monticello, Dan Jordan provided his insights and  
62 expertise to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American  
63 History, and the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia; he was a member of the  
64 U.S. Secretary of the Interior's National Park System Advisory Board and a planning group for a new  
65 entrance and museum at the United States Capitol; and

66 WHEREAS, among many accolades for his personal and professional achievements, Dan Jordan  
67 received the 2006 Outstanding Virginian award and the U.S. Department of the Interior's highest civilian  
68 honor, the Public Service Award; and

69 WHEREAS, Dan Jordan will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his beloved wife, Lou;  
70 his children, Daniel III, Grace, and Katherine, and their families; and numerous other family members  
71 and friends; now, therefore, be it

72 RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Daniel Porter  
73 Jordan, Jr., a respected historian who advanced the mission of Monticello and preserved the history and  
74 heritage of the Commonwealth through his exceptional leadership; and, be it

75 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution  
76 for presentation to the family of Daniel Porter Jordan, Jr., as an expression of the House of Delegates'  
77 respect for his memory.