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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 156

Offered January 24, 2022

Celebrating the life of the Honorable Harry Russell Potts, Jr.

Patrons—Wiley, Adams, D.M., Austin, Ballard, Convirs-Fowler, Fowler, Gooditis, Hodges, Hope, Kilgore, Morefield, Rasoul, Reid, Simonds, Watts and Willett; Senators: Barker, Deeds, Hanger, Howell, Saslaw and Stuart

WHEREAS, the Honorable Harry Russell Potts, Jr., a former member of the Senate of Virginia who produced a number of classic athletic events throughout his career in college sports marketing, died on December 19, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Russell "Russ" Potts developed a love of sports at a young age and played halfback on the John Handley High School football team; during that time, he began to cultivate his deep faith while attending services with teammates; and

WHEREAS, Russ Potts graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelor's degree in journalism and subsequently became the sports editor of the *Winchester Star* and *Loudoun Time Mirror*; in the 1960s, he also hosted a radio sports program called "Calling the Shots with Russ Potts"; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, Russ Potts returned to the University of Maryland as sports marketing director, the first such position in college athletics; he later served as assistant athletic director and oversaw the installation of the institution's first commercial scoreboard package, the first national television coverage of a women's basketball game, and high attendance records at football games; and

WHEREAS, Russ Potts became the athletic director of Southern Methodist University in Texas in 1978 and earned the Big D Award from the Dallas Sports Association for his achievements on behalf of the institution and the local sports community; and

WHEREAS, after a stint as vice president of the Chicago White Sox, Russ Potts established Russ Potts Productions, which promoted some of the largest and most successful independent sporting events in North America; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service, Russ Potts ran for and was elected to the Senate of Virginia in 1991 and represented the residents of the 27th District until 2008; he earned multiple Senator of the Year awards from a wide range of organizations, including the Virginia Education Association and the Virginia Medical Society; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as a state lawmaker, Russ Potts offered his expertise to several standing committees and introduced and supported many important pieces of legislation to benefit all Virginians, including the creation of the Christopher Reeve Stem Cell Research Fund and support for the Shenandoah River State Park; and

WHEREAS, in later life, Russ Potts served as executive director of the Winchester Education Foundation, which raised more than \$15 million for the renovation of John Handley High School and \$4 million for the Emil and Grace Shihadeh Innovation Center under his exceptional leadership; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades, Russ Potts was inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 2004 and the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators Hall of Fame in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Russ Potts will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Emily; his daughters, Katie and Kelly, and their families; and numerous other family members, friends, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle; 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 the Honorable Harry Russell Potts, Jr., a distinguished public servant who made countless contributions to collegiate sports; 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 the Honorable Harry Russell Potts, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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