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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 491

Offered February 16, 2011

Commending Henry W. McLaughlin.

Patrons-- Marsh, Barker, Edwards, Herring, Houck, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, McEachin, Miller, J.C., Northam, Petersen, Puckett, Puller, Ticer and Whipple

WHEREAS, Henry W. McLaughlin, after completing his bachelor's degree at Princeton University and the bachelor of laws degree at the University of Virginia, began his legal career in Halifax in 1967, working with his father, also an attorney; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, he joined the former Neighborhood Legal Aid Society in Richmond, and in March 1981, Henry W. McLaughlin became the Executive Director of Central Virginia Legal Aid Society (CVLAS) on the very day of the first proposal to defund federal civil legal services; and

WHEREAS, Henry W. McLaughlin worked ceaselessly to mobilize support from private attorneys to provide legal assistance to low-income people; and

WHEREAS, because of Henry W. McLaughlin's steadfast focus on and dedication to providing quality legal services to the poor, CVLAS and the Virginia Bar Association were awarded the Harrison Tweed Award by the American Bar Association for the Pro Bono Hotline, Virginia's first and largest pro bono hotline program; and

WHEREAS, due to the leadership and vision of Henry W. Laughlin, the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society and the Bar Association of the City of Richmond received the Pro Bono Housing Law Program award, a program in which private attorneys select legal aid clients for representation, and CVLAS became the first and only legal aid society that has twice received this distinction; and

WHEREAS, Henry W. McLaughlin's pro bono efforts have helped many persons obtain attorneys to secure protective orders, no-fault divorces, and emergency orders to stop impending evictions; and

WHEREAS, leading by example, and with persistence, hard work, and sheer intellectual prowess, Henry W. McLaughlin excelled among his peers and amassed numerous accomplishments, and he led his team of litigators to win a nationwide federal injunction halting evictions of public housing tenants without prior notice and opportunity for a hearing; and

WHEREAS, determined in his efforts to ensure due process for his clients, Henry W. McLaughlin represented public housing tenants in a federal court case that invalidated arbitrary, capricious, excessively broad, and underinclusive lease provisions; and

WHEREAS, in January 2010, Henry W. McLaughlin won a federal court case against a mortgage lender who failed to follow federal regulations before trying to foreclose, and the decision established a precedent requiring homeowners with Federal Housing Administration mortgages that are being foreclosed to be given an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting with the lender; and

WHEREAS, a prodigious litigator, Henry W. McLaughlin has been honored for exemplary legal service, particularly to the poor and disenfranchised, and his many prestigious achievements include: the Virginia State Bar's Annual Legal Aid Award in 1994; Virginia Lawyer's Weekly "Leader in the Law" in 2009, in addition to which he was selected by his fellow award recipients as the 2009 "Leader of the Leaders"; and the Bar Association of the City of Richmond's Hill-Tucker Public Service Award in March 2010; he is, moreover, a Fellow of the Virginia Law Foundation and a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, the only legal aid attorney to be so honored; and

WHEREAS, the inspiration and impetus behind legal aid in Richmond for 32 years, Henry W. McLaughlin tenaciously and tirelessly fights for the rights of tenants, homeowners facing foreclosure, survivors of domestic violence, and victims of predatory lending; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, Henry W. McLaughlin ended his service as Executive Director of Central Virginia Legal Aid Society; however, he continues to apply his tremendous political skills and legal genius in his private law practice dedicated to helping people fight foreclosure; and

WHEREAS, Henry W. McLaughlin maintains that legal aid is strategically positioned to effect a positive outcome on the "War on Poverty," and that attorneys who are privileged to be legal aid lawyers have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of their clients, and more so than any other legal aid attorney in Virginia, Henry W. McLaughlin has made that difference; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Henry W. McLaughlin; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Henry W. McLaughlin as an expression of the General Assembly's sincere appreciation of his remarkable devotion to the law and its gratitude for his ceaseless labor to ensure equal justice and access to quality legal services for the poor.

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