

Memorial Resolution Commemorating the Life of George Burke

WHEREAS George Burke's inspiring and passionate leadership of the 11th Congressional Democratic Committee of Virginia, and his energetic mentoring of many Democrats and Democratic candidates ended October 30, 2015 with his death; and

WHEREAS George ably served as the Communications Director for United States Representative Gerry Connolly, as well as friend and political advisor, for more than three Congressional terms; and

WHEREAS, George Burke was born in the Bronx, New York in 1951 and attended the University of New Hampshire, where he met his wife, Sharon, whom he married in 1973; and

WHEREAS, George began his journalism career doing freelance work as both a writer and photographer for the Associated Press, Newsweek, Discover and Yankee Magazine; in 1974 he was hired by Foster's Daily Democrat, where he worked for more than five years, becoming State Editor and Exeter Bureau Chief. During this time, he won numerous awards including "Best News and Story of 1978" from the New England Press Association; and

WHEREAS, in 1979 George relocated to Northern Virginia to accept a position with Congressman Norman D'Amours (D-NH) as his Communications Director, and later at the same post for Congressman James H. Scheuer (D-NY) from 1985-1987. During this time he served three terms as President of the Association of House Democratic Press Secretaries, and was a Press Officer for the Democratic Conventions in 1980 and 1988;

WHEREAS, George Burke left Capitol Hill to become the Director for the Department of Public Relations and Communication for the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), a union representing more than 300,000 professional firefighters and, in 2000, he was promoted to assistant to the general president for communications and media under then President Alfred K. Whitehead, and held this position until his retirement from the IAFF in 2004; and

WHEREAS, in the days and weeks following the September 11 terrorist attacks, George Burke worked with national media on the IAFF's response to the 9/11 disaster and continued to be a tireless advocate for our first responders throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, George Burke was elected Chair of the 11th District Democratic Committee in 2005, and also served as an advisor to numerous campaigns throughout Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, George Burke ceaselessly sought to broaden the Democratic Party by encouraging fair representation of diverse interests in the Democratic Party of Virginia; and

WHEREAS George Burke hosted a local political TV program, “Inside Scoop,” interviewing local politicians exploring the issues, which aired on Fairfax Public Access TV, and

WHEREAS, George was a gifted man of many talents, who spent 31 years as a professional ski instructor at Liberty Mountain; he was a spellbinding storyteller and an incisive wit, and he lived his life with gusto; and

WHEREAS George Burke was a man of honor who served his Party, his principles and his country to the utmost of his considerable ability; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Virginia honors George Burke for his contributions to the Democratic Party and offers its condolences to his family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be presented to the beloved center of George Burke’s life: his wife Sharon, and children Ian, Caitlin and Sean.

Submitted by Janet Carver on behalf of the 11th District Democratic Committee co-sponsored by the 8th District Democratic Committee.