

**No. R-292. Senate concurrent resolution in memory of former Representative John H. Downs.**

(S.C.R.27)

By Senators Kitchel, Benning, Doyle, Illuzzi, Mazza and Starr,

By Representatives Crawford of Burke, Johnson of Canaan, Kilmartin of Newport City, Koch of Barre Town, Larocque of Barnet, Lawrence of Lyndon, Peaslee of Guildhall, Reis of St. Johnsbury, South of St. Johnsbury and Toll of Danville.

*Whereas*, former Representative John Downs was a distinguished Vermont legal, political, and civic leader, and

*Whereas*, a graduate of Yale University and Harvard Law School and a World War II United States Army veteran, John Downs commenced the practice of law in St. Johnsbury with Sterry Waterman, and

*Whereas*, after Sterry Waterman became a federal judge, John Downs' solo practice evolved into the state's largest law firm of Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC, and

*Whereas*, in the early 1950s, John Downs was elected Caledonia County's state's attorney, and a decade later, the voters of St. Johnsbury twice elected him to the House of Representatives in which his two terms included membership on the Committee on Appropriations and chairing the Committee on Ways and Means, and

*Whereas*, John Downs would later prove a most able chair of the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees, and

*Whereas*, his interest in national politics resulted in John Downs' selection as a delegate to the 1964 Republican National Convention, and after he

switched political affiliations, he held the same role at the Democratic National conventions in 1968 and 1972, and

*Whereas*, John Downs was a respected member of the Vermont bar whose personal and institutional contributions to the legal profession were enduring, and

*Whereas*, among the most meaningful of his professional endeavors was providing pro bono representation for African-Americans in Mississippi and Alabama during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, and

*Whereas*, in the 1970s, John Downs served as president of the Vermont Bar Association and was an early proponent for the establishment of Vermont Law School, and

*Whereas*, from 1983 to 1993, John Downs applied his legal wisdom to an international canvas, serving as a member of the prestigious Lawyers Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control, and

*Whereas*, this greatly respected attorney died in July 2011 at the age of 91 with survivors including his wife, Virginia, his children, Margaret, Peter, and Thomas, and four grandchildren, *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly expresses its sincere condolences to the family of former Representative John H. Downs, and be it further

***Resolved:*** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Virginia Downs in Shelburne, and to the law firm of Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC in St. Johnsbury.