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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF ALAN KERR

Introduced By: Representatives Ajello, Shekarchi, Walsh, Noret, and Fogarty

Date Introduced: January 30, 2020

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Alan Kerr, a distinguished longtime automotive and travel journalist for the
2 Providence Journal, passed away on January 18, 2020; and

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Kerr was born in 1935 in Berlin, Germany, to foreign correspondent
4 Melvin Whiteleather and Eleanor Lindsay Whiteleather. He made worldwide news when, as a
5 six-month old infant, he became the youngest person to fly on the famous airship the Hindenberg;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. Kerr returned from Europe to the United States in 1941. He graduated
8 from Woodrow Wilson High School in Washington, D.C., in 1954, and subsequently entered the
9 United States Army and served our nation with distinction for three years; and

10 WHEREAS, After completing his military service obligations, Mr. Kerr enrolled in the
11 University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, from which he graduated in 1961 with a degree in
12 journalism. Prior to entering college, Mr. Kerr had signed up for a speed writing class where he
13 met the love of his life, Jessie Parry-Hill. After a one year courtship, they married in 1958 and
14 were together for sixty-one years; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Kerr began his distinguished journalism career as a reporter with the
16 Durham Morning Herald. He went on to work for the Charlotte Observer where he worked as a
17 writer, editor and manager. In 1969, he reported on the disturbances at NCA&T University from a
18 phone booth in a crouching position to avoid gunfire; and

19 WHEREAS, After working as a journalist for a decade, Mr. Kerr enrolled in the Master's
20 program at the University of Florida, graduating in 1978. He then proceeded to embark on a

1 career in academia, serving as a professional advisor to the student newspaper at the University of
2 Florida, teaching journalism at Northern Arizona University, and serving as the Faculty Advisor
3 to the University's student newspaper; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Kerr returned to the news business in 1979. He finished his remarkable
5 journalism career with the Providence Journal, where he worked as the Auto Editor and "took
6 great pleasure in test-driving cars through 'the curves of hell' at the I-295 and Route 6
7 interchange"; and

8 WHEREAS, In addition to his wife, Jessie, Mr. Kerr is survived by his son and daughter-
9 in-law, Jason and Janet, daughter, Mandy, and his beloved canine companion, Freddy; now,
10 therefore be it

11 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
12 Providence Plantations hereby expresses its condolences to the Kerr Family on the passing of
13 Alan Kerr; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
15 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mrs. Jessie Kerr and Family.

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