

ENROLLED ORIGINAL

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

25-156

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

December 5, 2023

To recognize and honor the life and accomplishments of Admiral Jim Toole.

WHEREAS, Admiral Morton “Jim” Toole was born in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, on February 14, 1937;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole’s father, who was a career Army officer and who retired as a colonel, earned the Legion of Merit during World War II, and later moved the family to Menlo Park, California;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole, according to his daughter, said that he wanted to go into the Navy and make his career there because his father already had a successful career in the Army;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole studied American history at the University of California at Los Angeles, serving in the Navy ROTC, and received his Bachelor’s degree and commission in 1957;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole spent 6 years at sea with the Navy before moving to the District to work on guided-missile systems, and he took night classes at American University to receive a Master’s degree in International Relations;

WHEREAS, when Adm. Toole graduated from American University in 1966, he had been assigned to Vietnam, where he commanded more than 50 American patrol boats on the Mekong River and earned the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole later commanded a radar-picket destroyer, guided-missile frigate, and guided-missile cruiser before retiring from the Navy in 1987;

WHEREAS, by the early 1990s, Adm. Toole began frequenting Capitol Hill Books, opened and founded by Bill Kerr in 1991, and located in the Eastern Market neighborhood in a three-floor rowhouse;

WHEREAS, after Mr. Kerr passed away in 1994, Adm. Toole bought the store in 1995 from Mr. Kerr’s sister;

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WHEREAS, during his tenure as owner of Capitol Hill Books, he became known for his charmingly grumpy presence at the front desk and filling the store with books in every conceivable space, with fiction upstairs, nonfiction on the ground level, sports and science-fiction in the basement, cookbooks in the former kitchen sink, and foreign language books in the bathroom;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole was also known for his system of “controlled disorganization”, as he would refer to it, arranging books in tall stacks and naming them “Tolkien Tower” and “Wacko Stacko”, which housed books by right-wing personalities;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole was also known for requiring order and decorum at Capitol Hill Books, banning the wearing of backpacks and cellphone conversations inside the store, and having a list of “banned words” from conversation, such as the use of the words “perfect,” “awesome,” “like,” and “totally”;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole’s sense of humor and unique, old-fashioned approach to sales – he used a pencil to record each transaction – earned him a devoted following;

WHEREAS, in July 2018, Adm. Toole sold Capitol Hill Books to long-time employees and friends of the store, noting that the new owners shared his vision for preserving Capitol Hill Books as an independent bookstore and ensuring that the business maintains its place as a literary hub for the community;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole was known for his wit, charming curmudgeoness, and generosity, all of which contributed to Capitol Hill Books becoming as a staple in the Capitol Hill community and a nationally-known, eclectic bookstore;

WHEREAS, Adm. Toole tragically passed away on Veteran’s Day, November 11, 2023, and is survived by his wife, daughter, three stepchildren, and six grandchildren;

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Jim Toole Posthumous Recognition Resolution of 2023".

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and honors the life and accomplishments of Admiral Jim Toole.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.