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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 899 Session of  
2018

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INTRODUCED BY D. COSTA, MURT, TOOHL, BERNSTINE, QUIGLEY,  
DIGIROLAMO, O'NEILL, BARRAR, RYAN, MILLARD, HEFFLEY, WARD,  
MARSHALL, MARSICO AND SAYLOR, MAY 3, 2018

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
MAY 3, 2018

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the life of former heavyweight wrestling champion  
2 and Pennsylvania hero, Bruno Sammartino, and expressing  
3 condolences on his passing.

4 WHEREAS, Bruno Leopoldo Francesco Sammartino was born in  
5 Pizzoferrato, Italy, on October 6, 1935; and

6 WHEREAS, Bruno was the youngest of Alfonso and Emilia  
7 Sammartino's seven children and spent his childhood in the  
8 Abruzzo region of Italy; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1939 Bruno's father immigrated to the United  
10 States, although the remaining Sammartino family members were  
11 not able to reach the United States until years later, having  
12 been faced with significant obstacles to immigration brought on  
13 by World War II; and

14 WHEREAS, While the war was ongoing, during a period of German  
15 occupation, Bruno and his family fled Nazi forces, escaping into  
16 the mountains of Abruzzo where they hid for approximately 14  
17 months; and

1       WHEREAS, After the war, Bruno and other members of the  
2 Sammartino family immigrated to the United States, settling in  
3 Pittsburgh where they were reunited with Bruno's father; and

4       WHEREAS, The war left Bruno malnourished and sickly, and he  
5 would later recall that he weighed only 90 pounds when he first  
6 arrived in the United States; and

7       WHEREAS, His poor health and limited English speaking ability  
8 made Bruno the target of bullies at Schenley High School; and

9       WHEREAS, As a result, Bruno became determined to work towards  
10 becoming physically fit through weightlifting and wrestling; and

11       WHEREAS, By the time Bruno graduated from high school in  
12 1953, he had attained remarkable physical prowess and weighed  
13 225 pounds; and

14       WHEREAS, Over the next several years, Bruno continued to lift  
15 weights and train, eventually setting a world record by bench  
16 pressing 565 pounds; and

17       WHEREAS, In 1959 Bruno married Carol Teyssier, and in the  
18 same year signed a \$250 a week contract with Capitol Pro  
19 Wrestling; and

20       WHEREAS, In 1963, wrestling in the World Wide Wrestling  
21 Federation, Bruno pinned heavyweight wrestling champion Buddy  
22 Rogers at Madison Square Garden, marking the beginning of  
23 Bruno's championship career; and

24       WHEREAS, Bruno reigned as heavyweight wrestling champion from  
25 1963 to 1971 and again from 1973 to 1977, holding the title for  
26 more than 12 years in total, the longest running champion of the  
27 World Wide Wrestling Federation and the longest world  
28 championship reign in professional wrestling history; and

29       WHEREAS, Bruno retired from full-time professional wrestling  
30 in 1981, although he later appeared in a few exhibition matches

1 and became a wrestling commentator during the early 1980s; and

2 WHEREAS, In 1987 Bruno officially retired and left the  
3 professional wrestling industry; and

4 WHEREAS, Bruno was inducted into the World Wrestling  
5 Entertainment's Hall of Fame in 2013; and

6 WHEREAS, Sadly, on April 18, 2018, Bruno Sammartino died at  
7 82 years of age; and

8 WHEREAS, Despite his early life experience being one of  
9 adversity, given his humble background, his childhood in war  
10 torn Italy and having to adapt to a new culture as an  
11 adolescent, Bruno ultimately achieved great success; and

12 WHEREAS, His life story exemplifies how the American Dream  
13 can be achieved through hard work and an unwavering spirit; and

14 WHEREAS, Bruno not only developed his phenomenal physique and  
15 performed feats of great strength, he forged a meaningful life  
16 as a proud resident of his adopted hometown of Pittsburgh and as  
17 a loving husband and father; and

18 WHEREAS, While his career led him around the world where he  
19 gained great acclaim performing in front of sellout crowds,  
20 Bruno remained a humble and sincere man who was extremely proud  
21 of his heritage and of his Pittsburgh roots where he was first  
22 recognized as the "Italian Strongman," not only for his  
23 athleticism, but for his genuine good guy personality that has  
24 made him such an endearing figure; and

25 WHEREAS, It is for these reasons that Bruno will always be  
26 remembered as a hometown hero and the embodiment of a great  
27 Pennsylvanian; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the  
29 life and accomplishments of Bruno Sammartino and extend  
30 condolences to his family, friends and admirers.