

Enrolled

House Concurrent Resolution 16

Sponsored by Representative GOMBERG; Senator SMITH DB

Whereas United States Army Specialist Four (SP4) Paul Jeffrey “Jeff” Cochran was born on October 6, 1947, to Beverly Cochran-Durham; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran’s friends and peers called him Paul, but to his family, he was “Jeff”; and

Whereas during a Christmastime visit to Santa Claus when he was a young boy, the only thing SP4 Cochran asked for was a new fridge for his mom’s apartment, demonstrating the thoughtfulness that would define him throughout his life; and

Whereas in 1964, SP4 Cochran moved in with his grandparents, Paul and Marguerite Cochran, and lived with them at their home at 1545 College Street in Philomath, Oregon, until 1966; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran began attending Philomath High School in 1965, and he joined the school’s baseball team, the Philomath Warriors, that same year; and

Whereas during a legendary April 28, 1965, ball game against Salem Academy, SP4 Cochran pitched a 3-hitter and struck out 13 batters, giving the Warriors a critical edge on their way to a 6-1 victory over Salem; and

Whereas by the time of his graduation in 1966, SP4 Cochran had played high school baseball and football, participated in speech competitions, acted in the school play and served as the Sergeant at Arms for his class’s student council; and

Whereas in the months following graduation, SP4 Cochran spent his days deep in thought, driving around Philomath in his 1957 Ford Thunderbird and contemplating what his future might hold; and

Whereas over the course of that summer, SP4 Cochran came to the realization that he wanted to be part of something bigger than himself, and in the fall of 1966, he enlisted in the United States Army, attending basic training at Fort Lewis in Tacoma, Washington; and

Whereas in the spring of 1967, SP4 Cochran attended United States Army Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he earned his “Jump Wings” and became a paratrooper; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran joined the 101st Airborne Division, known affectionately as the “Screaming Eagles,” at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and in December 1967, he was deployed to South Vietnam; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran was well respected for his prowess as a soldier, but to his platoon mates, he was a stalwart friend and a brother; and

Whereas during his time in Vietnam, SP4 Cochran earned the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal and the Expert Rifleman Badge; and

Whereas in a letter to his grandmother Marguerite dated March 20, 1968, SP4 Cochran pondered whether the blossoms in Philomath were yet in bloom; and

Whereas on May 1, 1968, SP4 Cochran was killed during combat operations in Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran knew that serving his country was what he was meant to do, and he gave his life to uphold that destiny; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran’s awards and decorations that were posthumously awarded to his grandmother Marguerite included the Bronze Star Medal with Oakleaf Cluster for meritorious service, the Purple Heart, the Good Conduct Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran was buried in 1968 at the Willamette National Cemetery in Portland, Oregon; and

Whereas the Paul J. Cochran Memorial Scholarship was established at Philomath High School in 1968 to honor SP4 Cochran's sacrifice, and it was awarded to its first recipient, graduating senior Ben Beddingfield, that June; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran's name appears on panel 53E, line 29, of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.; and

Whereas on August 5, 2018, 50 years after SP4 Cochran's death, his loving mother Beverly passed away; and

Whereas in February 2019, Shane Cochran-Fritz, SP4 Cochran's sister and executor of their mother's estate, came to Philomath City Hall and revealed that Beverly's final wish was that the property at 1545 College Street be donated to the City of Philomath in order to create a memorial park further honoring SP4 Cochran's sacrifice; and

Whereas Beverly wished for the park to become a communal space where people could gather together to reflect on the human cost of war; and

Whereas in accordance with Beverly's wishes, the City of Philomath demolished the home at 1545 College Street on August 15, 2020, making way for the park to come; and

Whereas the City of Philomath was awarded a Veterans and War Memorial Grant from the State Parks and Recreation Department in 2022 for a granite memorial to be erected at the park; and

Whereas construction of the Paul J. Cochran Veterans Memorial Park began in August 2023; and

Whereas the Paul J. Cochran Veterans Memorial Park dedication took place on November 9, 2024, and Shane Cochran-Fritz had the honor of cutting the ribbon and officially opening the park to the public; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran is survived by Shane Cochran-Fritz, his brother Nicholas Cochran, his half-brother Fritz Baier, his nieces and nephews, and countless others that considered him a dear friend; and

Whereas SP4 Cochran will always be remembered for his thoughtfulness and generosity of spirit, and he was loved by his family, his friends, his fellow soldiers, his Philomath High School classmates and his country; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Eighty-third Legislative Assembly, recognize and honor Specialist Four Paul Jeffrey "Jeff" Cochran for his service to his country.

Adopted by House March 10, 2025

Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

Julie Fahey, Speaker of House

Adopted by Senate March 27, 2025

Rob Wagner, President of Senate