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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5025

Offered April 19, 2006

Commending the George Mason University men's basketball team.

Patrons—Scott, J.M., Bulova, Abbitt, Albo, Alexander, Amundson, Armstrong, BaCote, Barlow, Bell, Bowling, Brink, Byron, Callahan, Caputo, Carrico, Cline, Cole, Cosgrove, Cox, Crockett-Stark, Dance, Dudley, Ebbin, Eisenberg, Englin, Fralin, Frederick, Gear, Gilbert, Griffith, Hall, Hamilton, Hargrove, Hogan, Howell, A.T., Howell, W.J., Hugo, Hull, Hurt, Iaquinto, Ingram, Janis, Joannou, Johnson, Jones, D.C., Jones, S.C., Kilgore, Landes, Lewis, Lingamfelter, Lohr, Marsden, Marshall, D.W., Marshall, R.G., May, McClellan, McEachin, McQuigg, Melvin, Miller, Moran, Morgan, Nixon, Nutter, O'Bannon, Oder, Orrock, Peace, Phillips, Plum, Poisson, Purkey, Putney, Rapp, Reid, Rust, Saxman, Scott, E.T., Shannon, Sherwood, Shuler, Sickles, Spruill, Suit, Tata, Toscano, Tyler, Valentine, Waddell, Ward, Wardrup, Ware, O., Ware, R.L., Watts, Welch, Wittman and Wright; Senators: Bell, Blevins, Chichester, Colgan, Cuccinelli, Deeds, Devolites Davis, Edwards, Hanger, Hawkins, Herring, Houck, Howell, Lambert, Locke, Lucas, Marsh, Martin, McDougale, Miller, Newman, Norment, Obenshain, O'Brien, Potts, Puckett, Puller, Quayle, Rerras, Reynolds, Ruff, Saslaw, Stolle, Ticer, Wagner, Watkins, Whipple and Williams

WHEREAS, on Sunday, March 26, 2006, at the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C., the men's basketball team from George Mason University made Virginia and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) history; and

WHEREAS, breaking with big athletic program dominance, the 2005-2006 national championship marked the first time since the NCAA field was expanded to 64 teams in 1985 that no top-seeded team appeared in the Final Four and the second time in the NCAA's tournament history; and

WHEREAS, making their NCAA tournament debut as an at-large team, George Mason's Patriots are the first Colonial Athletic Association team to ascend to the NCAA Final Four; and

WHEREAS, in an amazing run, the 11th-seeded George Mason University defeated Wichita State, as well as number six-seed Michigan State and number three-seed North Carolina in the NCAA Division I tournament to advance to the "Sweet Sixteen"; and

WHEREAS, in the regional final, up against a heavily favored University of Connecticut team with superior height and experience, the Patriots maintained their offensive composure and exhibited considerable defensive skill, scoring six straight three-pointers in the second half, shooting 5-for-6 in overtime, in defeating the Huskies 86-84; and

WHEREAS, Jai Lewis was high scorer for the Patriots with 20 points, followed by Will Thomas and Lamar Butler with 19 points each, Folarin Campbell with 15 points, Tony Skinn with 10 points, and off the bench, Sammy Hernandez with 3 points; Lamar Butler was named the most outstanding player of the game; and

WHEREAS, by defeating the formidable, top-seeded Connecticut Huskies in a stunning 86-84 upset in overtime, the George Mason University Patriots were the first Virginia team in more than 20 years to play in the coveted NCAA Final Four; and

WHEREAS, in reaching the Final Four, the Patriots defeated three former national champions; and

WHEREAS, Coach Jim Larranaga deserves much credit for his exemplary leadership, sportsmanship, integrity, and commitment to George Mason University and his players; and

WHEREAS, the George Mason University players and coaches showed great resolve, resiliency, teamwork, and sportsmanship in their fairy-tale quest for the NCAA Division I title; and

WHEREAS, the 2005-2006 Patriots have written a new and exhilarating chapter in the history of George Mason University men's basketball; and

WHEREAS, the Patriots, in their riveting, first NCAA title bid, have drawn overwhelming national attention and acclaim to George Mason University, Fairfax County, and the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend and congratulate the Patriots of George Mason University on their exceptional performance and their astounding journey to the NCAA tournament Final Four; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to President Alan Merten and to Head Coach Jim Larranaga on behalf of the Patriots as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations on their remarkable 2005-2006 season and best wishes for future success.

INTRODUCED

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