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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 307

Offered February 18, 2010

Commending Mark Coward.

Patrons—Brink, Abbitt, Cosgrove, Cox, M.K., Crockett-Stark, Garrett, Gilbert, Howell, W.J., Jones, Landes, Lewis, Loupassi, Miller, P.J., Morgan, Nixon, Nutter, O'Bannon, Pollard, Shuler and Tata; Senators: Barker, Blevins, Colgan, Hanger, Houck, Howell, Locke, Lucas, McEachin, Miller, J.C., Miller, Y.B., Puckett, Puller, Quayle, Saslaw, Vogel, Watkins and Whipple

WHEREAS, Mark Coward, the Executive Director of the Virginia YMCA, retired in December 2009 after almost three decades of outstanding service in leadership development activities for teenagers throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia YMCA has a unique responsibility among YMCAs in Virginia by providing high school students throughout the state with opportunities for leadership development through community service, civic engagement, and model government programs; and

WHEREAS, Mark Coward joined the Virginia YMCA as the Associate Executive Director in 1981, and was selected as the third Executive Director of the Virginia YMCA on June 1, 1992; and

WHEREAS, during Mark Coward's 28 years of leadership, the Virginia YMCA has had an impressive record of accomplishments, and several hundred thousand Virginia high school students have participated in the Model General Assembly, the Model Judiciary Program, the Teen Leadership conferences, and the High School Youth (Hi-Y) government clubs; and

WHEREAS, Mark Coward cultivated relationships between the Young Lawyers Division of the Virginia Bar Association and high schools throughout the Commonwealth and expanded the Model Judiciary Program, which are mock trials held in circuit courts with selected schools arguing oral appeals before the Supreme Court of Virginia; today over 1,500 students participate in 50 - 75 trials a year throughout the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Mark Coward fostered relations with state legislators to ensure the continued success of the Model General Assembly, which is a reenactment of the state's legislative process for high school students; approximately 600 students from over 60 statewide schools attended the 2009 Spring conference at the Capitol in Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Mark Coward initiated the middle school one-day Model General Assembly programs, called Teen Leadership Conferences, that teach middle school students about state government; and

WHEREAS, Mark Coward began the youth Symposium on Current Affairs, a weekend program where high school students debate issues of national and international importance, as well as the Williamsburg program that teaches students about issues of the 1770s and relates them to current issues; and

WHEREAS, Mark Coward has devoted almost 30 years of service to leadership development through community service, civic engagement, and model government programs for teenagers throughout the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend and congratulate Mark Coward for his conscientious and enthusiastic work on behalf of Virginia's teenagers; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Mark Coward as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for his commitment to developing leadership opportunities for the Commonwealth of Virginia's youth and dedication to the principles of the Virginia YMCA that provide a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

INTRODUCED

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