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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 205

Offered February 28, 2012

Commending James C. Rees IV.

Patrons—Ebbin, Puller, Barker, Black, Blevins, Carrico, Colgan, Deeds, Edwards, Favola, Garrett, Hanger, Herring, Howell, Locke, Lucas, Marsden, Marsh, Martin, McDougle, McEachin, McWaters, Miller, J.C., Miller, Y.B., Newman, Norment, Northam, Obenshain, Petersen, Puckett, Reeves, Ruff, Saslaw, Smith, Stanley, Stosch, Stuart, Vogel, Wagner and Watkins; Delegates: Albo, Sickles and Surovell

WHEREAS, James C. Rees IV, whose visionary leadership of George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, Museum & Gardens has made it the most popular historic home in America, has announced his retirement as president and chief executive officer on June 1, 2012, after nearly three decades of distinguished service; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of The College of William & Mary, which later awarded him an honorary doctorate, James Rees earned a master's degree from The George Washington University and came to Mount Vernon as director of development and communications in 1983; and

WHEREAS, in that role, James Rees coordinated a fundraising campaign that helped Mount Vernon surpass its \$10 million goal for its first major capital campaign; and

WHEREAS, an exemplary administrator, James Rees served as associate director for nine years, overseeing several departments, before being named president and chief executive officer in 1994; and

WHEREAS, James Rees envisioned a restored Mount Vernon that would welcome visitors from around the world and provide an enlightening and in-depth look at how the nation's first president lived; and

WHEREAS, James Rees has overseen the opening of a new orientation center, museum, and award-winning education center that features 25 new galleries and theaters and a \$5 million big screen movie theater to enhance the visitor experience; and

WHEREAS, James Rees led the restoration and reconstruction of George Washington's distillery and gristmill; the creation of a new four-acre exhibition area farm site, including the reconstruction of George Washington's octagonal barn; the continued preservation of Washington's viewshed; and numerous other restorations to the 500-acre estate; and

WHEREAS, James Rees' leadership has grown Mount Vernon's annual attendance to over one million visitors per year, making it one of the largest tourist attractions in not only Northern Virginia, but also the entire Commonwealth, and generating significant employment and revenue for Fairfax County and Virginia; and

WHEREAS, James Rees has worked to increase Mount Vernon's endowment from \$4 million to over \$125 million, exceeded an \$85 million capital campaign goal by raising a total of \$116 million, and managed fundraising efforts in a bleak economic climate that have resulted in the securing of \$82 million out of the \$100 million needed for the new Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington, which will serve as Washington's presidential library; and

WHEREAS, a sought-after speaker on George Washington and Mount Vernon, James Rees has made appearances on various network morning programs and given presentations at numerous seminars and major museums; and

WHEREAS, James Rees, as author and co-author of several books, including *Treasures from Mount Vernon: George Washington Revealed* and *George Washington's Leadership Lessons: What the Father of Our Country Can Teach Us about Effective Leadership and Character*, has expanded the body of knowledge concerning the nation's first president; and

WHEREAS, James Rees provided valuable insight and guidance to colleagues as the president of the Virginia Association of Museums and the Friends of the Potomac River and has served in various capacities with numerous other organizations, committees, and boards throughout his career; and

WHEREAS, James Rees' extraordinary leadership has resulted in a Mount Vernon well-positioned to preserve George Washington's home and legacy for years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend James C. Rees IV on the occasion of his retirement for his dedication to one of the Commonwealth's great treasures, George Washington's Mount Vernon; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to James C. Rees IV as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration and respect for his dedicated efforts to preserve and share Mount Vernon with the nation.

INTRODUCED

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