

2013 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 402

Commending Ralph R. White, Jr.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 7, 2013
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 15, 2013

WHEREAS, a staunch conservationist, uncompromising public servant, and the James River's best friend, Ralph R. White, Jr., retired from the James River Park System in 2012; and

WHEREAS, born in New York City, Ralph White learned to appreciate nature during family vacations to the Adirondack Mountains; in 1968, Ralph White joined the forestry service of the Peace Corps; and

WHEREAS, after returning to the United States in 1974, Ralph White began seasonal work in the United States National Parks and was later awarded an internship at the Aullwood Audubon Center; and

WHEREAS, as a volunteer with the Sierra Club, Ralph White first came to Richmond in 1978, a time when the newly formed James River Park System was in need of invigoration; and

WHEREAS, Ralph White briefly returned to the American West before relocating to Richmond for good in 1980, this time to become the de facto manager of the James River Park System; and

WHEREAS, with no employees and an annual budget of \$5,000 for the park system's more than 500 acres, Ralph White mobilized the community, setting initiatives in motion that would transform the land into the beautiful, accessible parks Richmonders enjoy today; and

WHEREAS, Ralph White's volunteers launched a massive effort, cleaning up litter and pollution, building trails, clearing weeds, and providing easy access to the parks; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Ralph White received The Sierra Club's Distinguished Service Award, one of the club's highest honors, for his efforts to keep the James River Park System clean and wild; and

WHEREAS, frequently maintaining the James River Park System with his own hands, Ralph White was as likely to be found sweeping floors as he was giving tours of Richmond's blue heron rookery; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the Richmond Friday Cheers concert series dedicated a night to Ralph White as an expression of the city's gratitude for his valuable contributions to the park system and the city; and

WHEREAS, Ralph White worked tirelessly to build and protect the wonderful parks that have become a central element of the Richmond community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Ralph R. White, Jr., on the occasion of his retirement from the James River Park System; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Ralph R. White, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his unyielding public service and dedication to the James River Park System.

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