

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 344

Commending Bruce Bernard Smith.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 2, 2017
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 10, 2017

WHEREAS, Bruce Bernard Smith, a native of Norfolk and a former professional football player, was honored by the Buffalo Bills of the National Football League in 2016 when the team retired his jersey number, 78; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Smith played football at Booker T. Washington High School and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, where he earned an Outland Trophy as one of the nation's best interior linemen; he was drafted by the Buffalo Bills in 1985 with the first overall pick of the National Football League (NFL) draft; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Smith played for the Buffalo Bills for 15 seasons, including four Super Bowl appearances in the 1990s; he was a two-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year and a four-time American Football Conference Defensive Player of the Year, and he was selected for the Pro Bowl 11 times; and

WHEREAS, finishing his career with four seasons with the Washington Redskins, Bruce Smith recorded 46 forced fumbles, 15 fumble recoveries, two interceptions, and one touchdown in his 279 games; he holds the NFL record for all-time sacks with 200 and the record for most seasons with double-digit sacks; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Smith was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2009, his first time on the ballot; only a small number of NFL players are selected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and he is the only Hall of Famer from Norfolk; and

WHEREAS, after his football career, Bruce Smith returned home to Norfolk to give back to the community that had given him so much; he has supported Booker T. Washington High School athletics teams, funded scholarships at Queen Street Baptist Church, offered his time and guidance to students as a motivational speaker, and owns Bruce Smith Enterprises, a real estate and development business; and

WHEREAS, Bruce Smith's jersey was retired during halftime of the Buffalo Bills' 2016 home opener on September 15, 2016, with more than 100 prominent Virginians in attendance; it was only the second time that the team had retired a jersey number in its 56-year history; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Bruce Bernard Smith, an exceptional professional football player and community leader in Norfolk, on having his jersey number retired by the Buffalo Bills; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Bruce Bernard Smith as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his exceptional career as a professional athlete and for his numerous contributions to the Norfolk community.