

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 371

Commending Martinsville Speedway.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 9, 2017
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 2017

WHEREAS, Martinsville Speedway, a historic automobile racing track in Henry County and the oldest track still in use by the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, has served the motorsports community for 70 years; and

WHEREAS, Martinsville Speedway traces its roots to 1946, when H. Clay Earles, a highly respected local businessman, began construction on an oval-shaped dirt track that could seat 750 spectators; nearly 9,000 people attended the first race in 1947; and

WHEREAS, Martinsville Speedway was part of the inaugural season of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) in 1948; and

WHEREAS, H. Clay Earles was well-known for saying that Martinsville Speedway was always under construction, and he oversaw continuous improvements to ensure that drivers and fans had the best possible experience; in 1955, Martinsville Speedway led the way for other racing tracks as one of the first to convert from a dirt surface to a paved track; and

WHEREAS, in the 1960s, Martinsville Speedway became the first track with a fully enclosed, air-conditioned press box and instituted its most unique feature, the presentation of coveted, locally made grandfather clocks to race winners; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, Martinsville Speedway earned additional national attention when it was featured in the climactic scene of *The Last American Hero*, a feature film about NASCAR driver Junior Johnson; and

WHEREAS, Martinsville Speedway was purchased by the International Speedway Corporation in 2004, bringing unprecedented resources to the track and allowing it to continue its commitment to innovation; in 2017, Martinsville Speedway completed work on a new LED light system, the first such system on a NASCAR premier series track; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, H. Clay Earles, who served as chair of the Martinsville Speedway Board of Directors until his death in 1999, posthumously received the NASCAR Hall of Fame Landmark Award for his legacy of leadership in motorsports and unparalleled service to NASCAR and its fans; and

WHEREAS, Martinsville Speedway opens its 70th anniversary season on the weekend of March 31, 2017, with the Virginia Lottery Pole Day on Friday, the Alpha Energy Solutions 250 Camping World Truck Series on Saturday, and the STP 500 Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series on Sunday; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Martinsville Speedway for its exceptional service to the Martinsville community and racing fans from around the world on the occasion of its 70th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Martinsville Speedway as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its contributions to motorsports in the Commonwealth.

ENROLLED

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