

2018 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 226

Offered February 6, 2018

Commending Barter Theatre.

Patrons—O'Quinn and Pillion; Senators: Carrico, Chafin and Stanley

WHEREAS, in 2018, Barter Theatre, a beloved professional theater in Abingdon, celebrates 85 years of contributions to cultural life in Washington County and the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Barter Theatre traces its roots to 1933, when actor and Abingdon native Robert Porterfield returned to his hometown and organized a small theater company; with the United States mired in the Great Depression, he proposed an innovative payment system in which poor farmers could trade vegetables, dairy products, and livestock in exchange for tickets to shows; and

WHEREAS, Barter Theatre staged its first production on June 10, 1933, and its "Ham for Hamlet" concept soon proved to be a runaway success; in 1946, the Virginia General Assembly designated Barter Theatre as the State Theatre of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, renowned as one of the most storied repertory theaters in the United States, Barter Theatre features a resident company of talented professional actors who perform a year-round selection of comedies, musicals, mysteries, dramas, and other works; and

WHEREAS, each year, Barter Theatre draws over 160,000 visitors to its two stages; in honor of its early roots, it also organizes one performance a year where donations for a local food bank can be traded for admission; and

WHEREAS, many famous performers have graced Barter Theatre's stages, including Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Frances Fisher, and Wayne Knight; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its stage productions, Barter Theatre maintains close ties to the Abingdon community by hosting school field trips, workshops for businesses, a youth academy for students, and an annual young playwrights festival; and

WHEREAS, over its illustrious history, Barter Theatre has delighted audiences and won national recognition for its outstanding live theater productions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Barter Theatre on its contributions to the arts on the occasion of its 85th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Barter Theatre as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for its rich history and legacy.

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