

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 174

Commending the Honorable William J. Howell.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 2018
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 23, 2018

WHEREAS, the Honorable William J. Howell, a consummate public servant and a true Virginia gentleman who represented the residents of parts of Stafford County and Fredericksburg in the Virginia House of Delegates for three decades, including 15 years as Speaker of the House, retired from public office in 2017; and

WHEREAS, William "Bill" J. Howell grew up in Alexandria and attended Fairfax County Public Schools; he earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Richmond and a law degree from the University of Virginia, where he met his wife of 51 years and greatest supporter, Cecilia Stump Howell, with whom he has two sons, William Fayette and Leland Jackson, and seven grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Bill Howell began his professional career in wills and estate law and offered his leadership and expertise to several financial institutions; he established and ran the trust department of the National Bank of Fredericksburg from 1977 to 1990, when he established his own law practice in a log cabin in Falmouth; and

WHEREAS, desirous to be of further service to the community and the Commonwealth, Bill Howell ran for and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1987 and went on to win 14 additional terms, representing parts of Stafford County and Fredericksburg in the 28th District; and

WHEREAS, Bill Howell introduced and supported numerous pieces of legislation to strengthen the Commonwealth and enhance the lives of all Virginians; he offered his legal expertise to the House Committee for Courts of Justice for many years, becoming co-chair in 2000 and chair in 2002; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, Bill Howell was elected as Speaker of the House, ultimately becoming the third longest-serving Speaker; during his 15-year tenure in the office, he built a legacy of pragmatism, dignity, and fairness, earning the respect and admiration of his fellow legislators for his ability to diffuse tense disagreements with his quick wit and his strict adherence to rules and procedures for members of both parties; and

WHEREAS, among his proudest accomplishments, Bill Howell carried four major pieces of transportation legislation, including the bipartisan transportation funding and reform bill in 2013 and legislation that created Virginia's process for prioritizing transportation funding, the first such process in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Bill Howell also carried legislation to reform the Virginia Retirement System, reducing unfunded liabilities by \$9 billion, and established a major commission in 2016 to study additional pension reform; and

WHEREAS, seeking to safeguard the Commonwealth's valuable natural resources, Bill Howell sponsored the land preservation tax credit and land conservation fund, and as a result, more than 800,000 acres of land, valued at more than \$3.7 billion, were preserved by individuals and private organizations; and

WHEREAS, during his time as Speaker of the House, Bill Howell received national recognition as chair of the American Legislative Exchange Council and the State Legislative Leaders Foundation National Speakers Conference; he earned many state and local awards and accolades, including the renaming in his honor of the library that is now the William J. Howell Branch in Stafford; and

WHEREAS, having served the Commonwealth with the utmost integrity, dedication, and distinction, Bill Howell received the prestigious 2018 Outstanding Virginian Award, presented by the Outstanding Virginian Committee in partnership with the University of Virginia Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy to recognize leaders who have made an indelible mark on the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Honorable William J. Howell on his selection as the Outstanding Virginian for 2018; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Honorable William J. Howell as an expression of the General Assembly's profound gratitude and extraordinary respect for the Gentleman from Stafford and admiration for his exemplary service to God, his family, the General Assembly, and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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