

2018 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 92

Celebrating the life of Fred J. Whyte.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 8, 2018
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 16, 2018

WHEREAS, Fred J. Whyte, a respected and influential business leader who spent over two decades as president of the Virginia Beach-based equipment manufacturer STIHL, Inc., died on July 7, 2017; and

WHEREAS, born in Vancouver, British Columbia, Fred Whyte earned his bachelor's degree from Seattle University and his master's degree from the University of Iowa; in 1971, he took a role as a regional manager at STIHL American, the same company where his father had worked; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte's business acumen, personal integrity, and strong leadership skills saw him move rapidly through the ranks at STIHL; he was named product manager in 1975 and national sales manager in 1979, and in the early 1980s, he expanded the company's operations by opening STIHL, Ltd., a Canadian subsidiary; and

WHEREAS, after achieving great success in Canada, Fred Whyte returned to Virginia Beach in 1992 and took over as president of STIHL, Inc.; he remained in the role for 23 years until his retirement in 2015; and

WHEREAS, with Fred Whyte at the helm, STIHL, Inc., expanded from several dozen employees to over 2,000 people working in a two-million-square-foot facility, and its Virginia Beach location began exporting products to nearly 100 countries around the globe; for seven straight years, its line of gasoline-powered handheld outdoor power equipment was the best-selling brand in North America; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte introduced many new innovations to STIHL, Inc., such as robotic and automation technology, and he oversaw the development of a laboratory used by Dream It Do It Virginia, a career resource that teaches individuals about jobs in manufacturing and technology; and

WHEREAS, as president of STIHL, Inc., Fred Whyte was respected not only for his steady hand and ability to reach consensus with colleagues, but also for his personal management style, which included making regular visits to the company's shop floor and learning employees' favorite sports teams; and

WHEREAS, along with his 44-year career at STIHL, Inc., Fred Whyte also brought his talents to a number of manufacturing boards and organizations, including serving as chair of the board of directors for the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute and as a president of the Portable Power Equipment Manufacturers Association; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte gave back to his community by serving as rector of the Old Dominion University Board of Visitors and as a member of the board of directors for the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters Children's Health Foundation; an animal lover, he was also a strong supporter of the SPCA; and

WHEREAS, during his long and distinguished career, Fred Whyte received numerous professional awards; in 2015, the Virginia Manufacturing Association presented him with the Frank Armstrong III Service Award to honor his contributions to manufacturing; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte was happiest when watching sports, reading, swimming, or spending time with his family and his dogs; in keeping with his Scottish heritage, he was also an accomplished bagpiper who played in bands in the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte will be fondly remembered and dearly missed by his wife, Karen; children, Jean and John, and their families; and countless other family members, friends, and colleagues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Fred J. Whyte, a dedicated business leader and pillar of the Virginia manufacturing industry; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Fred J. Whyte as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

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