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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 761

Offered January 28, 2019

Celebrating the life of George Welsh.

Patrons—Bell, Robert B. and Toscano; Senator: Deeds

WHEREAS, George Welsh, a visionary college football coach who helped elevate the University of Virginia's football program to become one of the best in the nation, died on January 2, 2019; and

WHEREAS, George Welsh grew up in Coaldale, Pennsylvania, where he graduated from Coaldale High School; he went on to play quarterback for the United States Naval Academy football team and was a contender for the Heisman Trophy in 1955; and

WHEREAS, after working as an assistant coach at Pennsylvania State University for 10 years, George Welsh returned to his alma mater as head coach of the Navy Midshipmen football team in 1973; during his nine-year tenure, the team went 55 - 46 - 1 and won the 1978 Holiday Bowl, the team's first bowl game appearance in 15 years; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, George Welsh accepted the head coaching position for the University of Virginia, which at the time had only finished two of its previous 29 seasons with a winning record; by his third season, he led the team to an 8 - 2 - 2 record and victory against Purdue University in its first-ever bowl game appearance, the 1984 Peach Bowl; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1987, George Welsh helped the University of Virginia Cavaliers achieve 14 consecutive winning seasons, including 13 consecutive seasons with seven or more victories, and 11 postseason bowl game appearances; and

WHEREAS, under George Welsh's leadership, the University of Virginia Cavaliers won their first Atlantic Coast Conference championship in 1989 and were ranked as the top team in the nation for the first time in 1990; he won coach of the year awards in 1983, 1984, 1991, and 1995 and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame and the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, known for his meticulous attention to detail, incomparable work ethic, and undeniable love of the game, George Welsh created a culture of excellence at the University of Virginia by encouraging his players and staff to reach their fullest potential; and

WHEREAS, George Welsh emphasized the importance of high academic achievement for all of his players, and the team consistently received national accolades for its graduation rates among scholarship players; and

WHEREAS, George Welsh retired in 2000 as the winningest coach in the ACC at the time and the most successful coach in University of Virginia history with a 134 - 86 - 3 record over the course of his 19-season career; and

WHEREAS, George Welsh was a trusted mentor to his players and his staff both on and off the field; many of his players received All-American honors and went on to play in the National Football League and several of his assistant coaches became successful head coaches at other institutions; and

WHEREAS, George Welsh will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by numerous family members, friends, colleagues, and former players on whose lives he had a profound impact; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of George Welsh, legendary head coach of the University of Virginia football team; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of George Welsh as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.

INTRODUCED

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