

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 933

Commending Frederick S. Middleton III.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 18, 2019
Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2019

WHEREAS, Frederick S. Middleton III, executive director of the Southern Environmental Law Center since he founded the organization in 1986, has dedicated years of outstanding service to the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Frederick "Rick" S. Middleton III, a native son of Birmingham, Alabama, graduated from the University of Virginia in 1968, then returned to Charlottesville in 1985 to settle and raise his family; and

WHEREAS, Rick Middleton graduated from Yale Law School in 1971, when many of this nation's fundamental environmental laws were being passed, and became one of the first attorneys to begin enforcing the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act; he has spent his entire career in the vanguard of environmental law in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Rick Middleton joined the staff of the Alabama Attorney General's office, then headed the Washington, D.C., office of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund; his work with both organizations convinced him that the natural resources of the southeastern United States were vulnerable and in need of protection; and

WHEREAS, Rick Middleton founded the Southern Environmental Law Center in 1986 to defend the environment and health of Virginia, along with the five other southeastern states of Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama; and

WHEREAS, Rick Middleton based the Southern Environmental Law Center on a collaborative approach that now includes hundreds of partnerships with other organizations; under his three decades of leadership, it has grown into the largest environmental advocacy organization in the southern United States; and

WHEREAS, during Rick Middleton's tenure, the Southern Environmental Law Center won a unanimous decision in the United States Supreme Court that catalyzed the largest clean-up of power plant pollution in modern times; pursued the clean-up of toxic coal ash that had been stored in unlined pits and was leaking into rivers and groundwater; played a lead role in securing permanent protection for wild and remote roadless areas throughout the Southern Appalachian National Forests, as well as wilderness designation for the Priest and Three Ridges areas in Virginia's George Washington National Forest; protected millions of acres of valuable wetlands; helped curb motor vehicle pollution; worked to revitalize communities and protect open space; and helped ensure that all Virginians have clean water to drink; and

WHEREAS, Rick Middleton has won numerous awards and accolades for his work, including recognition from the Garden Club of America on its 100th anniversary, when he was presented with the Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal for outstanding lifetime achievement in environmental protection and maintenance of quality of life; and

WHEREAS, after a highly successful and productive career, Rick Middleton will retire in 2019 after 33 years as founder and executive director of the Southern Environmental Law Center; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Frederick S. Middleton III on the occasion of his retirement as founder and executive director of the Southern Environmental Law Center, which has benefited current and future citizens of Virginia by protecting the Commonwealth's precious environmental heritage; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Frederick S. Middleton III as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his distinguished service and many valuable contributions to protecting the environment and health in the Commonwealth.

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