

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 978

Commending the Brown family.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 18, 2019
Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 2019

WHEREAS, over the past 100 years, the Richmond-based Brown Distributing Company, owned by the Brown family, has grown from a producer of a single cherry soda to a nationally acclaimed, highly regarded beverage distribution business that operates in two states; and

WHEREAS, in 1919, brothers Abraham and Isadore Brown formed a soda-bottling business where they produced a cherry-flavored soft drink; the company soon grew to become a Pepsi bottler and distributor, serving the Richmond-Petersburg market area; and

WHEREAS, the end of Prohibition in 1933 allowed the Brown family to add their first beer, the Maryland-brewed "Wolf Beer," to their operation; and

WHEREAS, as a result of their tremendous growth within the beer business, in 1935, the Brown family became the Anheuser-Busch wholesaler for the Richmond-Petersburg market area; and

WHEREAS, that same year, a second generation of the Brown family, Abraham Brown's son, Jacob, joined the business; and

WHEREAS, in 1951, Abraham and Jacob Brown formed Brown Distributing Company in Richmond to manage the beer side of the business; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, the Brown family sold its Pepsi operation in order to focus on its beer distribution; during this period, a third generation of the family, Jacob Brown's son, Larry, was instrumental in expanding their business when they acquired an Anheuser-Busch franchise in Petersburg in the footprint of the family's original Pepsi bottling operation; and

WHEREAS, in 1999 and 2006 respectively, a fourth generation of the family, Larry Brown's sons, Jason and Reid, joined the business and began enlarging its scope, adding a non-alcohol portfolio including teas, waters, and juices; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, Brown Distributing Company acquired Legendary Distributing, a Richmond start-up craft distribution company, which allowed the Brown family to start selling a variety of local and regional craft beers; and

WHEREAS, after 100 years in business, the Brown family now distributes more than 700 brands of beer and other beverages, operates a fleet of more than 115 vehicles, and employs more than 550 individuals; and

WHEREAS, the Brown family makes significant investments in alcohol awareness and education programs, as well as designated driver programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Brown family for its 100 years of success in the beverage industry; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Brown family as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the longevity of their business and their commitment to the community.

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