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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 178

Offered February 3, 2020

Commending Harold Wright, Jr.

Patron—Bell

WHEREAS, Harold Wright, Jr., a distinguished broadcasting pioneer who created the first local news station in Charlottesville, retired in 2020; and

WHEREAS, hailing from Georgia, Harold Wright attended the University of Virginia, where he earned a degree in engineering and was involved with the university's radio station; following graduation, Harold Wright explored his interests in broadcasting further, working for and later owning a local radio station, WELK; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the need for a local news television broadcast in Charlottesville, Harold Wright established WVIR-TV, more commonly known by locals as NBC29, which went on the air for the first time on March 11, 1973; starting with salvaged broadcast equipment and only a few employees, WVIR-TV grew to have a staff of nearly 100 people and became a leading source of news in the community; and

WHEREAS, earning recognition over the years for its quality programming under Harold Wright's leadership, WVIR-TV was the recipient of 45 first-place awards from *The Associated Press* for excellence in journalism, three Associated Press Douglas Southall Freeman Awards for its public service through journalism, and four prestigious Edward R. Murrow Awards; and

WHEREAS, serving as a member of the UVA Health System Community Relations Committee and volunteering for many years with the University of Virginia Children's Hospital, Harold Wright often generously volunteered WVIR-TV's services to conduct telethon fundraisers on behalf of the hospital, raising over \$18 million; and

WHEREAS, beyond his contributions to the community as a broadcaster, Harold Wright has given his time and talents in service to others as a charter member and past president of the Blue Ridge Mountains Rotary Club and as a volunteer with the Charlottesville Dogwood Foundation, the Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, and his church, Effort Baptist Church in Palmyra; and

WHEREAS, to honor his steadfast dedication in support of his community, the Charlottesville Chamber of Commerce bestowed its highest distinction, the Paul Goodloe McIntire Citizenship Award, upon Harold Wright in 2007; and

WHEREAS, nearing the conclusion of an inimitable broadcasting career, *The Associated Press* awarded Harold Wright with the Robert Gallimore Distinguished Service Award in 2018 to celebrate his remarkable efforts in the public interest and in support of the journalism profession; and

WHEREAS, considering an informed citizenry is the foundation of our democracy, Harold Wright's timely and relevant local news coverage over nearly a half-century has provided an invaluable service to the residents of Charlottesville; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Harold Wright, Jr., the broadcaster who first brought local news to televisions around Charlottesville, on the occasion of his retirement; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Harold Wright, Jr., as an expression of the General Assembly's heartfelt respect and admiration for his contributions to Charlottesville and the Commonwealth.

INTRODUCED

HJ178