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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 184

Offered February 4, 2020

Commending Ollan Conn Cassell.

Patrons—Kilgore, Morefield, O'Quinn, Rush and Wampler; Senators: Chafin and Pillion

WHEREAS, Ollan Conn Cassell, the only Virginian from the coalfields region to win an Olympic gold medal, supported countless young American athletes through his active leadership as a former director of USA Track & Field; and

WHEREAS, Ollan Cassell was born in Scott County and grew up in Pardee, a mining town in Wise County, where he was a multisport athlete at Appalachia High School; he was the school's only representative at the 1956 state track and field meet and won the 220-yard dash with a time of 21.8 seconds; and

WHEREAS, Ollan Cassell attended East Tennessee State University on a football scholarship and subsequently transferred to the University of Houston, where he honed his skills as a track and field athlete; and

WHEREAS, during his college career, Ollan Cassell participated in the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Championship, Gulf Coast AAU Championship, and the Southwestern Relays, winning numerous events at distances between 100 and 440 meters; and

WHEREAS, after graduation, Ollan Cassell continued to achieve success at national and international track events, including the World Military Track & Field Championships, the Pan Am Games, the Texas Relays, the Kansas Relays, and the Coliseum Relays; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, Ollan Cassell represented the United States at the Games of the XVIII Olympiad in Tokyo and brought home a gold medal for his performance as the leadoff runner for the 4x400-meter relay team, which set a world record with a time of 3:00.7; and

WHEREAS, one year later, Ollan Cassell joined the staff of the AAU, which was the American governing body for 17 sports at the time; he rose through the ranks to become executive director and skillfully managed all aspects of the organization, including coordination with regional sports associations, television and marketing contract negotiations, and participation arrangements with foreign nations; and

WHEREAS, after the passage of the Amateur Sports Act of 1978, Ollan Cassell led the AAU into a new era, when the organization became The Athletics Congress and later USA Track & Field; the reorganization created new opportunities and a stronger framework for athletes to turn professional; and

WHEREAS, Ollan Cassell represented the United States on the International Amateur Athletics Federation, the world governing body on track and field, and was elected as vice president of the organization; and

WHEREAS, Ollan Cassell currently resides in Indianapolis, Indiana, with his wife of nearly 60 years, Cathy, and continues to serve and support track and field athletes and his fellow Olympians; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Ollan Conn Cassell for his athletic accomplishments and contributions to the advancement of track and field athletics in the United States; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Ollan Conn Cassell as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his personal achievements and support for athletes in Virginia and the United States.

INTRODUCED

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