

2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 544

Commending John E. Smith.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 25, 2021

WHEREAS, John E. Smith, a successful entrepreneur who established franchise McDonald's restaurants throughout Hampton Roads and has made countless contributions to the community through leadership development and youth programs, retired after more than two decades of service; and

WHEREAS, a native of Arkansas, John Smith pursued a career in marketing at the IBM Corporation, but was driven to take a more active role in building a business legacy defined by the opportunities it created, particularly for fellow African Americans; and

WHEREAS, John Smith applied to become a McDonald's franchise owner in 1996 and subsequently purchased a restaurant in the Denbigh area of Newport News; he worked diligently to learn every aspect of restaurant operations and ultimately expanded his company, J. Smith Enterprises, to 15 franchise locations by 2003; and

WHEREAS, as president and chief executive officer of J. Smith Enterprises, John Smith developed a company culture that treated staff members as potential fellow entrepreneurs, implemented a profit-sharing compensation model for managers, and offered a tuition reimbursement program to encourage staff members to continue seeking education; and

WHEREAS, John Smith offered his employees valuable instruction on financial literacy, profit analysis, hospitality, employee relations, community engagement, and operational efficiency in an effort to develop the region's next generation of business leaders; several former employees have gone on to hold high-ranking positions in the food service industry or achieve great success in other career fields; and

WHEREAS, a devoted servant-leader, John Smith volunteers his time and expertise to many community organizations, and his restaurants have held regular fundraisers for local schools and charitable organizations; his company has directly supported young people through the Summer Training and Enrichment Program and helped reduce recidivism through a work-release program for incarcerated individuals; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades for his creativity, ingenuity, and tenacity in building market share, John Smith is most proud of his Ronald Award, which is presented to McDonald's franchises that demonstrate a strong commitment to community service while maintaining operational excellence, and the Hurricane Isabel Hero award he received from the City of Hampton for his quick response to donate ice and water to people in need in the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel in 2003; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his long and distinguished career, John Smith employed thousands of people in Hampton Roads, served meals to millions of customers, and touched countless lives through his advocacy and mentorship, a legacy of service that his daughter, Jennifer Smith-Brown, will carry forward as president and chief executive officer of the company after his well-earned retirement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That John E. Smith hereby be commended on the occasion of his retirement as president and chief executive officer of J. Smith Enterprises; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to John E. Smith as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his personal and professional achievements.

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