

2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 320

Commending Deborah Pratt.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 21, 2023

WHEREAS, Deborah Pratt, a longtime member of the Middlesex County community, is known throughout the Commonwealth as a world-champion oyster shucker and as one of the icons of the sport; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Pratt grew up immersed in the oyster industry, with parents and other family members who worked in the trade; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Pratt started shucking oysters professionally in 1975 in the same oyster house where her parents met in the 1950s, and she worked tirelessly at the job to support her family while also managing a 35-year career as a nurse; and

WHEREAS, over the past several years, Deborah Pratt and her sister, Clementine Macon Boyd, have established themselves as the competition to beat at local oyster shucking competitions, with the ability to cleanly shuck and present two dozen oysters each in less than three minutes; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Pratt has been declared champion at the annual Urbanna Oyster Festival's Virginia State Oyster Shucking Competition multiple times and also achieved success at the U.S. National Oyster Shucking Championship Contest in St. Mary's County, Maryland, and the World Oyster Opening Championship in Galway, Ireland, where she competed four times; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Pratt and her sister, Clementine, were fixtures at the annual Richmond Folk Festival over several years as their "Shucking Smackdown" competition became one of the event's biggest draws; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Pratt competed at the 65th annual Urbanna Oyster Festival in November 2022 before a large crowd of adoring fans, winning the professional women's competition true to form; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Deborah Pratt, a superstar of the world of oyster-shucking, hereby be commended for her legacy as a champion and ambassador of the sport; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Deborah Pratt as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for her remarkable accomplishments and her many contributions to the Commonwealth.

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