

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 468

Celebrating the life of Anne Murphy O'Neil.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 24, 2023

WHEREAS, Anne Murphy O'Neil, a beloved resident of Lake Barcroft, died on November 22, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Neil, born Anne Frances Murphy, was the fourth of seven children born to Elvira Johann Murphy and Leo Joseph Murphy and grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin, where her father worked as a chiropractor; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Neil attended Catholic parochial schools in Appleton and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, before studying at what is now Mount Mary University in Milwaukee; she enjoyed golfing and swimming in her youth and studied dance and piano, developing a lifelong love of music, especially movie musicals; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Neil followed in the footsteps of her older sister, Mary, and became a teaching nun in the School Sisters of Notre Dame after graduating from college; however, after three years teaching sixth-graders as a nun, she came to realize that she did not feel a true religious calling and left the order; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Neil grew deeply interested in Montessori education with its strongly scientific and child-centric orientation; she became a successful Montessori teacher, then was recruited to become a trainer of Montessori teachers, which led her to Los Angeles, where she met her future husband, William "Will" O'Neil III; and

WHEREAS, the couple was married in 1968 and the following year moved to Northern Virginia after Will accepted a position in the office of the Secretary of the Navy at the Pentagon; and

WHEREAS, Anne and Will O'Neil eventually bought a prewar center-hall Colonial style home on Braddock Road in Alexandria, and Anne, inspired by visits to Colonial Williamsburg and restored historic houses, began to study Colonial American and classical English and French design to aid her in remodeling their home; and

WHEREAS, after the birth of their son, William "Billy" O'Neil IV in 1973, Anne and Will O'Neil decided to seek a more child-centered neighborhood; they ultimately chose the Lake Barcroft community and purchased a house in need of extensive renovations, which Anne skillfully handled; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Neil's accomplishments in design attracted a number of residential and commercial clients; among her most notable works was the design of The Kandahar, an elegant Afghan restaurant on M Street in Georgetown, for which restaurant reviewers for the region's major newspapers raved at length about the beauties of its décor; and

WHEREAS, when her son began attending Sleepy Hollow Elementary School and Anne O'Neil learned that there was no funding for a theater program, she developed a program for third and fifth graders to present classics of American musical theater like "The Wizard of Oz," "Oliver," and "Annie Get Your Gun"; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Neil prepared scripts suitable for the children, obtained copyright permission, recruited adults to support the plays, and served as producer and director; every child who wanted to participate received a part and experienced teachers exclaimed that they had never seen school drama with such enthusiasm and energy; and

WHEREAS, in 1985, Anne and Will O'Neil moved to Burbank, California, where Anne renovated yet another home, working with a Native American artist and craftsman to create a modernized version of a traditional California Spanish home; while in California, she took on several home design projects for local clients and continued her musical theater workshops for children, putting on productions of "Scrooge!" and "My Fair Lady"; and

WHEREAS, after a few years, the couple returned to Northern Virginia and settled again in Lake Barcroft; they found a lakeside home dating from 1960, and working with Anne O'Neil's plans and under her day-to-day direction, contractors altered the floorplan, modernized all of the house's systems and major appliances, and applied all new finishes in just three months; and

WHEREAS, the great room at the O'Neil house was the site of many musical events, including performances by the Riverbend Opera, a local professional opera company, and many fundraisers for community organizations and local leaders; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Anne O'Neil joined the staff of the Lake Barcroft Newsletter and began a series of monthly interviews with residents; she was active in the Lake Barcroft Woman's Club and was elected as its president in 2013, leading the club to record fundraising in support of local Northern Virginia charities during her term; and

WHEREAS, during the early period of the COVID-19 pandemic, with masks in very short supply, Anne O'Neil led community mask-sewing efforts; she subsequently took the lead in other initiatives to support community members who had been affected by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Neil was a bright light in the community and brought joy to others through her creativity, generosity, and grace; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Neil will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by her husband, Will; her son, Billy; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of Anne Murphy O'Neil; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Anne Murphy O'Neil as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for her memory.