

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 171

Commending Fred Whyte.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 25, 2016
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 4, 2016

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte began his career at STIHL American—the same multinational company where his father worked—as a regional manager, and began working for STIHL Inc., in 1971, and served as president of the Virginia Beach-based power equipment manufacturer during two decades of record sales growth, until his retirement on December 31, 2015; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte was named product manager in 1975, and was promoted to national sales manager in 1979; and

WHEREAS, when he was 34, Fred Whyte became president of STIHL Ltd., and founded the international corporation's Canadian operation in 1982; during his 10 years at STIHL Ltd., the company recorded increased sales each year; and

WHEREAS, after his success as the founder and head of STIHL's Canadian subsidiary, Fred Whyte returned to Virginia and was named president of STIHL Inc., in 1992; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, when STIHL Inc., first opened in Virginia Beach and was one of the first industrial development locations in the city, the company had 50 employees and assembled one model of one chain saw; by the time of Fred Whyte's retirement in 2015, STIHL Inc., employed more than 2,000 people who manufacture more than 270 model variations of power equipment in a facility that encompasses more than 2 million square feet under roof; and

WHEREAS, under Fred Whyte's leadership, STIHL Inc., celebrated seven consecutive years as the top-selling brand of gasoline-powered handheld outdoor power equipment in the nation; additionally, the company, which exports products to more than 90 countries from its Virginia Beach facility, never laid off a full-time employee due to lack of work; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte served as president of STIHL Inc., and during his tenure, the company helped to spearhead many initiatives that improved competitiveness in the local manufacturing sector and generated innovative workforce development programs; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte introduced robotics and automation technology to STIHL Inc. and provided an incubator/laboratory, where the Dream It Do It Virginia manufacturing technology summer camp program was developed; and

WHEREAS, Fred Whyte has been a leader in the outdoor power equipment industry and served as chair of several industry trade associations; he has received many accolades and awards during his outstanding career, including the 2015 Frank Armstrong III Service Award from the Virginia Manufacturers Association; and

WHEREAS, giving back to the community has been an important part of Fred Whyte's career; he is a member of the Board of Visitors of Old Dominion University and serves on the Board of Directors of the Children's Health Foundation of Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend an exceptional business leader, Fred Whyte, who retired in 2015 as president of STIHL Inc., in Virginia Beach; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Fred Whyte as an expression of the General Assembly's respect and admiration for his many years of dedicated work and inspiring leadership of one of the Commonwealth's leading industrial manufacturers.