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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 732

Offered August 2, 2021

Commending the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University.

Patrons—Plum, Bulova and Filler-Corn

WHEREAS, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University, which offers first-rate educational programming for retirees in Northern Virginia, celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University (OLLI-Mason) in Fairfax County has become one of the premier lifelong learning institutes in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Learning in Retirement Institute was founded in 1991 as the brainchild of the Fairfax Commission on Aging and visionary Kathryn Brooks, who wanted to establish educational and social opportunities for a growing base of active seniors in Northern Virginia, an age group expected to continue to grow well into the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, the Learning in Retirement Institute soon became affiliated with George Mason University as part of the university's strategic vision to extend its learning mission into the community, including seniors interested in maintaining an active intellectual life; and

WHEREAS, the Learning in Retirement Institute thereafter received a generous endowment from the Bernard Osher Foundation, a nonprofit that has dedicated millions of dollars to enhancing the quality of life in the United States through education and the arts; and

WHEREAS, OLLI-Mason's mission is "to offer to its members learning opportunities in a stimulating environment in which adults can share their talents, experiences and skills, explore new interests, discover and develop latent abilities, engage in intellectual and cultural pursuits, and socialize with others of similar interests"; and

WHEREAS, by all measures, OLLI-Mason has fulfilled its goals; what started two decades ago as a member-run school with 100 members operating and teaching out of one room in George Mason University's Commerce II building has burgeoned, today, into a robust, first-rate educational and social institute with 1,100 members; and

WHEREAS, OLLI-Mason annually offers retirees in Northern Virginia more than 600 courses, special events, and excursions over four academic terms and across three campuses in Fairfax, Reston, and Loudoun County; from arts to zoology, religion to science, there is a topic to satisfy anyone without the pressures of homework, exams, or grades; and

WHEREAS, the population of people age 50 and older in Northern Virginia is booming and its members are living longer and healthier lives; policymakers at all levels are working vigorously to develop programs and services to help them continue to participate more fully in their communities; and

WHEREAS, an unprecedented number of these older Americans are shuttered at home today, avoiding the serious health risks associated with the historic COVID-19 pandemic gripping this country since March 2020; and

WHEREAS, in response, OLLI-Mason converted to online programming, offering an intellectual and social lifeline to those who have been isolated for months as they safely ride out the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the foresight of George Mason University and the County and City of Fairfax in developing OLLI-Mason has helped address the critical need to offer programs that enhance the quality of life for retirees in Northern Virginia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University hereby be commended on the occasion of its 30th anniversary for its resounding success in serving the educational and social needs of retirees in Northern Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for the program's years of success and best wishes for the future.

INTRODUCED

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