

2022 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 19

Commending Rita Carter Forrester.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 11, 2022

WHEREAS, Rita Carter Forrester, the granddaughter of two members of one of the most influential folk and country music bands of all time, the Carter Family, has worked diligently to preserve the band's legacy and promote Southwest Virginia's contributions to the American musical landscape; and

WHEREAS, presented by the General Assembly's Outstanding Virginian Committee in conjunction with The University of Virginia's Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, the Outstanding Virginian Award is considered the Commonwealth's highest civilian honor and is awarded to citizens, such as Rita Carter Forrester, who have distinguished themselves through extraordinary civic service; and

WHEREAS, the Carter Family, originally comprised of Sara Carter, her husband, A.P. Carter, and her sister-in-law, Maybelle Carter, became local legends playing at town events, church functions, and house parties in Scott County and throughout Southwest Virginia and became one of the first groups to record commercially produced country music at the famed Bristol Sessions in 1927; and

WHEREAS, known as "the first family of country music," the members of the Carter Family were highly admired for their exceptional talents, commitment to honing their craft as musicians, and prolific songwriting, and they influenced other performers in a wide range of genres for decades; and

WHEREAS, in 1979, Janette Carter, daughter of Sara and A.P. Carter, established the Carter Family Fold as a concert venue dedicated to performances of old-time country and bluegrass music; located in what is now Hiltons, the venue has helped preserve traditional musical styles and support local artists, while also welcoming nationally known performers like Johnny Cash; and

WHEREAS, Rita Carter Forrester, Janette Carter's daughter, has continued to uphold the family legacy of musical preservation and became the executive director of the Carter Family Memorial Music Center, which includes the Carter Family Fold, after her mother's death in 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Carter Family Memorial Music Center has thrived under Rita Carter Forrester's leadership, with the Carter Family Fold hosting weekly concerts to celebrate traditional Appalachian music and dancing, as well as serving delicious family dishes based on recipes passed down through generations; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, Rita Carter Forrester presided over a major project to renovate and rededicate the Carter Family Museum, an unparalleled collection of Carter Family memorabilia; and

WHEREAS, the Carter Family Memorial Music Center also features the restored 1880s cabin where A.P. Carter was born and the organization holds an annual Carter Family Memorial Festival in August; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her work with the Carter Family Memorial Music Center, Rita Carter Forrester is a full-time employee of her alma mater, East Tennessee State University, as an administrative assistant; she often works long and late hours to ensure that the Carter Family Fold fulfills its mission to serve and enrich the community; and

WHEREAS, Rita Carter Forrester has shared the joys of the Appalachian mountain lifestyle with visitors from around the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world and ensured that fans of the Carter Family and all music lovers have a place to learn about and appreciate the early roots of country music; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Rita Carter Forrester hereby be commended on her selection as the 2022 Outstanding Virginian for her work to preserve the rich musical heritage of Southwest Virginia as executive director of the Carter Family Memorial Music Center; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Rita Carter Forrester as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for her contributions to cultural life in the Commonwealth.

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