

2022 SPECIAL SESSION I

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 714

Offered May 31, 2022

Commending Vera Anna Lichtenberg.

Patron—Tran

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg, an admired and highly respected founder of the Mason Game & Technology Academy at George Mason University, retired in 2022 after an illustrious and fulfilling 10-year career at the university, during which time she touched the lives of thousands of young people; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg was born in the formerly Communist country of Czechoslovakia, now Czech Republic (Czechia), and became a proud citizen of the United States and resident of the Commonwealth in 1968; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg earned bachelor's degrees in English and political science from the George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg recognized that there was a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) skills and knowledge gap in Virginia's public school curricula and founded the Mason Game & Technology Academy (MGTA) at George Mason University in 2012 to fill that gap; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg single-handedly created the curriculum, management structure, and internal partnerships for the MGTA; she also recruited faculty members and teaching assistants, secured the labs, and marketed the MGTA to Virginia's public schools and teachers; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg further identified that students in grades six through 12 were resisting STEM classes in general, so she focused on offering courses using STEM-related programs, such as Python, C++, 3D modeling and animation, 3D game development, and artificial intelligence to design and build games to better entice students to enter STEM careers; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg further realized students much more easily learned STEM and STEM-related skills and knowledge through hands-on projects such as designing and building games; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg sought and received financial scholarships from the Jack Kent Cook Foundation, the Micron Foundation, Tencent Games, Envision Experience, and the Prince William County Public Schools Education Foundation to offer underserved students free enrollment in the MGTA; and

WHEREAS, as administrator and founding director, Vera Anna Lichtenberg expanded the MGTA at GMU to offer more than 100 STEM courses enrolling over 1,000 students per year; and

WHEREAS, under Vera Anna Lichtenberg's leadership, the MGTA became the largest STEM program in the Commonwealth, coaching thousands of students in STEM in the last decade; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg received numerous awards and accolades for her work, including a Virginia School Board commendation and the Prince William County School District Business Partnership of the Year Award in 2015 and 2018 for her support for students and Virginia schools; she was also a finalist in the 16th Annual Women in Technology Leadership Awards in the Small Business/Entrepreneur category; and

WHEREAS, Vera Anna Lichtenberg's passionate, selfless leadership of the MGTA helped to improve and supplement the educational options of children in Northern Virginia, especially the region's disadvantaged and underserved kids; and

WHEREAS, throughout their marriage, Vera Anna Lichtenberg has dedicated her unwavering and endearing love to her husband, Scott; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Vera Anna Lichtenberg hereby be commended on the occasion of her retirement; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Vera Anna Lichtenberg as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for her contributions to the Commonwealth and commitment to inspiring young people through STEM education.

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