

2023 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 268

Offered January 20, 2023

Commending Rick Nealis.

Patron—Kory

WHEREAS, in January 2023, Rick Nealis retired as race director of the Marine Corps Marathon after 30 years of exceptional service to both the United States Marine Corps and the running community as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Rick Nealis joined the United States Marine Corps, arriving in Quantico in 1972, and was on active duty as a supply officer, when he was given a logistical assignment as race director of the Marine Corps Marathon in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Rick Nealis retired from the military two years later, and while the position of race director was typically a two-year rotation, the Marine Corps changed the position to a permanent one and rehired him, making him the first civilian director of the race; and

WHEREAS, an avid runner with a personal best time of 3:09 from a previous Marine Corps Marathon, Rick Nealis was a natural fit to lead the event and quickly recognized its benefits and potential for growth; and

WHEREAS, Rick Nealis helped bring prominence to the Marine Corps Marathon after persuading Oprah Winfrey to run the race in 1994 and working with the torch relay for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta; and

WHEREAS, under Rick Nealis' leadership, the Marine Corps Marathon, which is hosted in the nation's capital with the start and finish in Arlington, has expanded to include an event series of more than a dozen races, including 10k and 50k races on marathon weekend, several trail races, a half marathon, a turkey trot, and a 17.75k race that commemorates the founding of the United States Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, Rick Nealis ably managed both the logistical and public relations aspects of the Marine Corps Marathon, which draws thousands of participants from around the country and the world and has an estimated regional economic impact of \$88 million each year; and

WHEREAS, Rick Nealis earned the admiration of his fellow race directors for his adaptability and eagerness to adopt new ideas and best practices; he became a nationally recognized leader in race running and generously provided his wise insights to organizers for races of every size; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Rick Nealis developed a virtual race to allow runners to participate from the safety of their own homes or neighborhoods or on local trails and courses to allow for social distancing; and

WHEREAS, Rick Nealis oversaw his final Marine Corps Marathon on October 30, 2022, a triumphant return to an in-person event after two years of limitations due to the pandemic; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Rick Nealis hereby be commended on the occasion of his retirement as race director of the Marine Corps Marathon in 2023; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Rick Nealis as an expression of the House of Delegates' admiration for his achievements in service to the United States Marine Corps and the race running community throughout the Commonwealth and the nation.

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