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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 265

Offered January 16, 2023

Commending Rhonda Howdyshell.

Patrons—Hanger; Delegate: Avoli

WHEREAS, Rhonda Howdyshell of Middlebrook, an inspirational community leader who has touched countless lives through her generosity and grace, was crowned as Ms. Virginia Senior America in 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Ms. Virginia Senior America pageant was established in 1984 to honor the dignity, maturity, and elegance of exceptional women in the Commonwealth like Rhonda Howdyshell and to recognize how seniors help create a strong foundation upon which younger generations can achieve greatness; and

WHEREAS, Rhonda Howdyshell overcame numerous health challenges in her youth, including aggressive cancer in her sinuses and complications from underlying Lyme disease that would not be diagnosed until years later; and

WHEREAS, after Rhonda Howdyshell graduated from high school, she began working in the fashion industry and was encouraged to compete in a Miss USA pageant, in which she finished as runner-up; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Rhonda Howdyshell was part of the inaugural staff upon the opening of the Frontier Culture Museum, an open air living history museum in Staunton that celebrates Colonial American life, and served as director of marketing and public relations until 2002, when she joined the Habitat for Humanity of Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro as executive director; and

WHEREAS, Rhonda Howdyshell ultimately returned to pageant competition, participating in a Mrs. America pageant and winning a Mrs. Virginia pageant; and

WHEREAS, after an incident that resulted in a broken crown during her tenure as Mrs. Virginia, Rhonda Howdyshell established CrownClips, which developed and manufactured a product to help pageant winners keep their crowns secure; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, Rhonda Howdyshell founded the Cinderella Project of the Shenandoah Valley, which continues to collect donated gowns and dresses for high school students in need of prom or graduation outfits; and

WHEREAS, Rhonda Howdyshell has also volunteered her leadership and expertise to many other organizations, including the Augusta Regional Free Clinic and the Ride with Pride equestrian therapy organization; and

WHEREAS, Rhonda Howdyshell broke down barriers as the first female member of her local Ruritan Club and overcame discrimination to become the first female president of the chapter; and

WHEREAS, drawing from her own experiences, Rhonda Howdyshell has raised awareness of the dangers of Lyme disease as an ambassador for the Global Lyme Alliance, and she authored an educational coloring book for children about the disease; and

WHEREAS, Rhonda Howdyshell has earned numerous awards and accolades for her commitment to servant-leadership, her unwavering generosity, and her earnest efforts to build a better world for her friends, family members, and everyone around her; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Rhonda Howdyshell on her selection as the 2022 Ms. Virginia Senior America; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Rhonda Howdyshell as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her personal and professional achievements and best wishes for the future.

INTRODUCED

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