

2023 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 89

Commending Dr. Donald James Finley.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 12, 2023

WHEREAS, Dr. Donald James Finley served with uncommon dedication and distinction as president of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council for a quarter century from shortly after the organization's founding until his retirement in 2022; and

WHEREAS, Donald "Don" Finley's tenure as president of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council was the culmination of a remarkable career defined by outstanding service to the Commonwealth and the field of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Don Finley served with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, served as a staff member and staff director of the House Appropriations Committee, served in Governor Charles Robb's administration as deputy secretary of finance and then as secretary of education, and served as secretary of education during all four years of Governor Gerald Baliles's administration; in addition, he served the nation in the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Don Finley's work as president of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council was exceedingly fruitful and contributed to major advances for higher education in the Commonwealth, such as significant increases in state support of higher education operations, faculty compensation, and student financial aid, including the unprecedented \$1 billion investment in the current biennium; and

WHEREAS, Don Finley's service also contributed significantly toward historic capital investments on campuses and landmark legislative measures to enable institutional advances, improve performance, enhance educational and employment opportunities for Virginians, and increase the positive impact on Virginia's economy, including the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005, the Top Jobs Act, the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Fund and Program, the Tech Talent Investment Fund and Program, the Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back Fund and Program, the Innovative Internship Fund and Program, and numerous other instructional and research initiatives; and

WHEREAS, during Don Finley's tenure, the Virginia Business Higher Education Council became the preeminent state-level public-private partnership advocating for higher education in the nation, forging meaningful partnerships among business leaders, college presidents, governors, legislators, and other officials in both political parties, and demonstrating that a diverse coalition based on trust and mutual respect can still work together productively for the common good; and

WHEREAS, the innovative advocacy programs implemented under Don Finley's leadership, including the successive Grow By Degrees and Growth4VA campaigns, significantly increased public and political support for higher education in Virginia by communicating that the Commonwealth's top-ranked system of colleges, universities, and community colleges provides a competitive advantage in economic development, an exceptionally well-qualified workforce, and a strong catalyst for economic growth and job creation; and

WHEREAS, through Don Finley's determined advocacy, generations of young Virginians will enjoy significantly enhanced job and career opportunities and make greater contributions to the larger community because of the profound ways their lives have been enriched by Virginia's higher education system; and

WHEREAS, Don Finley's outstanding personal qualities, including his impeccable character and integrity, sound judgment, extensive knowledge and experience, affable manner, keen wit, generous spirit, and insistence upon giving credit to others rather than drawing attention to himself, have inspired and elevated all who have had the privilege of working with him; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Dr. Donald James Finley hereby be commended for his exemplary service to the Virginia Business Higher Education Council; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dr. Donald James Finley as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for his personal and professional achievements and best wishes for the future.

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