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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 142

Offered February 26, 2024

*Commending the Honorable Robert J. Smith.*

Patrons—Surovell, Boysko, Ebbin, Marsden, Pekarsky and Salim; Delegates: Bulova, Cohen, Delaney, Helmer, Herring, Keys-Gamarra, Krizek, Seibold, Sickles, Simon, Sullivan, Tran and Watts

WHEREAS, the Honorable Robert J. Smith, a distinguished jurist and a dedicated veteran of the United States Army, retired as a judge of the Fairfax Circuit Court of the 19th Judicial Circuit of Virginia on January 31, 2024; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith grew up in Homer, Illinois, a small rural town south of Chicago, where he graduated from Homer High School; he subsequently earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and a law degree from what was then known as the John Marshall Law School; and

WHEREAS, having previously received a commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army, Robert Smith began his active duty military service in 1978 and reported to the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School in Charlottesville for training; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith was assigned to the Fort Stewart Legal Assistance Office, where he provided general legal advice to service members, their families, and retired personnel and represented hundreds of soldiers as defense counsel at courts-martial for various offenses from 1978 to 1982; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith carried out similar duties on deployments to Pirmasens, Germany, and Kaiserslautern, Germany, until he was reassigned in 1985 to the Administrative Law Office at Fort Belvoir, where he taught military law to soldiers and served as the Freedom of Information Act officer; and

WHEREAS, when the Fairfax County Public Defender Office opened in 1987, Robert Smith became its first senior assistant public defender and played a critical role in the growth and operation of the new agency, defending clients in at least 60 jury trials over the course of three years; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith was selected as a judge of the Fairfax County General District Court of the 19th Judicial District of Virginia in 1990 and served in that capacity until 2008, when he became a judge of the Fairfax Circuit Court of the 19th Judicial Circuit of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith presided over both courts with great fairness and wisdom during his 33 years and two months on the bench; he offered his leadership and expertise to various committees and was in charge of the group of judges who heard mental commitment hearings during his time in the district court; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1980s, Robert Smith transitioned from active duty military service to the United States Army Reserve and continued his meritorious service to the nation; in 1997, he began teaching a criminal law advocacy course twice yearly at the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, then held several postings over the next several years; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith was assigned to the 150th Judge Advocate General Detachment in Alexandria and the 154th Judge Advocate General Detachment at Fort Hood, Texas, then was mobilized to the Army Trial Judiciary in 2003, in which capacity he presided over trials in Virginia, New York, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith held positions in the reserve judiciary in Washington, Alaska, and California, until he was mobilized again in 2005 and joined the Army Court of Criminal Appeals, which hears court-martial appeals from around the country; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, Robert Smith was assigned to the chief judge of the army and held the only reserve position in which a reservist may preside over the highest level of court-martial, the general court-martial; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith finished his military career as the commander of the 154th Judge Advocate General Detachment, which is the chief trial judge of the United States Army Reserve, and was responsible for overseeing military judges around the world until his retirement in 2009; and

WHEREAS, among many awards and accolades, Robert Smith received the Legion of Merit for his outstanding conduct and accomplishments; over the course of his long and storied career, he served the Commonwealth and the United States with the utmost dedication, honor, and integrity; and

WHEREAS, Robert Smith has enjoyed the love and support of his wife, Dorothy, and their children, Alexandra and Peter, and looks forward to seeking new opportunities to serve his community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Honorable Robert J. Smith on the occasion of his retirement as a judge of the Fairfax Circuit Court of the 19th Judicial Circuit of Virginia; and, be it

INTRODUCED

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**58** RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for  
**59** presentation to the Honorable Robert J. Smith as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for  
**60** his legacy of service to the Fairfax community, the Commonwealth, and the nation.