

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

Commending George Mason University.

Agreed to by the Senate, January 20, 2022
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, January 24, 2022

WHEREAS, George Mason University, one of Virginia's finest institutions of public education, will celebrate its 50th anniversary on April 7, 2022; and

WHEREAS, originally known as George Mason College, George Mason University was established in 1957 as the Northern Virginia branch of the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, John "Jack" Wood, mayor of what was then the Town of Fairfax, worked with other town officials to acquire the original 150 acres of land for the Fairfax campus of George Mason University, and in 1969, Rector John "Til" Hazel, Jr., helped acquire an additional 421 acres of land to expand the campus; and

WHEREAS, on April 7, 1972, a contingent from George Mason College met with Governor A. Linwood Holton in Richmond for the signing of House Bill 210, which established George Mason University as a freestanding, baccalaureate public institution of higher education; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, George Mason University enrolled 4,166 students and employed 165 faculty members and 535 staff members; and

WHEREAS, George Mason University has since grown to operate three campuses in the Commonwealth: the original Fairfax campus established in 1964, the Arlington campus established in 1979, and the Prince William campus established in 1997; and

WHEREAS, Til Hazel also helped acquire George Mason University's School of Law, located in Arlington, in 1979; and

WHEREAS, in 1985, George Mason University's women's soccer team won the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) championship, defeating the University of North Carolina to claim the institution's first national title; and

WHEREAS, two George Mason University professors, James Buchanan and Vernon Smith, became the first two winners of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences from Virginia, winning the prize in 1986 and in 2002, respectively; and

WHEREAS, in March 2006, George Mason University's men's basketball team reached the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament by defeating teams from Michigan State University, the University of North Carolina, Wichita State University, and the University of Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, the Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation was established in Front Royal in 2008 to offer hands-on conservation biology training for students; and

WHEREAS, George Mason University Korea was established in Seoul, South Korea, in 2014 as a part of the Incheon Global Campus; and

WHEREAS, George Mason University achieved R1 "Highest Research Activity" status in 2016, which was reaffirmed in 2018, from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, recognizing the university as a tier-one top research university and for its 121 percent growth of research funding over the last decade; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, *U.S. News & World Report* named George Mason University as the most diverse university in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College created the ADVANCE program, a partnership that has helped more than 2,020 students transfer from a two-year program to a bachelor's degree track; and

WHEREAS, George Mason University achieved level three management autonomy in 2021, the highest level of management flexibility granted to public institutions of higher education in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, *Times Higher Education* magazine ranked George Mason University as the nation's top "young" university, compared with all other institutions less than 50 years old; and

WHEREAS, George Mason University offers a wide range of opportunities to students through the Antonin Scalia Law School, the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Health and Human Services, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the College of Science, the College of Visual and Performing Arts, the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, the Schar School of Policy and Government, the School of Business, and the Volgenau School of Engineering; and

WHEREAS, 61 percent of George Mason University students receive some form of financial aid, including 29 percent of undergraduates, who received Pell Grants; and

WHEREAS, of George Mason University's undergraduate students, 24 percent are first-generation

college students; and

WHEREAS, approximately one in 12 George Mason University students are affiliated with the military, including active-duty personnel, reservists, members of the National Guard, veterans, and military dependents; and

WHEREAS, George Mason University is the most diverse, fastest growing, and largest baccalaureate public institution of higher education in Virginia, with more than 39,134 students, 10,895 staff and faculty, and more than 215,900 alumni, including 135,300 currently living in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the George Mason University Board of Visitors, George Mason University Alumni Association, local governments, advisory committees, and interested citizens have planned numerous celebrations and commemorations of the institution's history and achievements throughout 2022; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend George Mason University on the occasion of its 50th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the president of George Mason University, Gregory Washington, and the rector of the institution, James Hazel, as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude for their extraordinary efforts to promote educational access and academic excellence in the Commonwealth.