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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 175

Offered February 1, 2022

Commending Weldon Edwards.

Patron—Avoli

WHEREAS, Weldon Edwards, a respected member of the Richmond community, broke down racial barriers as the first Black student-athlete at the University of Richmond in 1970; and

WHEREAS, Weldon Edwards grew up in Richmond and attended Maggie L. Walker High School, where he was a star member of the track and football teams; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, Weldon Edwards participated in the Amateur Athletic Union Junior Olympic Games in San Diego and gained the attention of college football recruiters from Dartmouth College, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Nebraska, Temple University, and the University of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, Weldon Edwards ultimately accepted an offer from the University of Richmond, taking the advice of his mother, Amanda, who knew several individuals from the university through her job at the Rotunda Club at the Jefferson Hotel; and

WHEREAS, wearing the number 22 jersey, Weldon Edwards took the field for the University of Richmond as a member of the freshmen football team in 1970; he encountered instances of discrimination on campus but forged many strong bonds with his fellow teammates and paved the way for other Black athletes and students at the institution; and

WHEREAS, Weldon Edwards joined the varsity football team in his sophomore year and scored two long touchdowns in the University of Richmond's season opener against the University of North Carolina, but unfortunately suffered a major knee injury in the following game; and

WHEREAS, after his recovery, Weldon Edwards played as a defensive back and presented a significant challenge for opposing offenses through his strength and speed; in 1972, he also won the 60-yard dash at the Southern Conference Indoor Track and Field meet and earned a berth in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Indoor Track and Field Championships; and

WHEREAS, Weldon Edwards graduated from the University of Richmond with a bachelor's degree in sociology; he attended tryouts for the World Football League and the National Football League and had signed a contract with what was then the Washington Redskins before sustaining another knee injury; and

WHEREAS, Weldon Edwards remained committed to honing his athletic abilities and was active in the Richmond community as a member of local flag football and softball teams; and

WHEREAS, Weldon Edwards served as an assistant football coach at the University of Richmond and worked for Loveland Distributing and Phillip Morris, then began a long and successful career with The Auto Connection as a car salesman; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Weldon Edwards for his trailblazing accomplishments as the first Black student-athlete at the University of Richmond; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Weldon Edwards as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for his personal and professional achievements.

INTRODUCED

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