

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 116

By Clemmons

A RESOLUTION to recognize David Williams II for his service to Vanderbilt University as Vice Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs and Athletics Director.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of service in higher education; and

WHEREAS, David Williams II is one such estimable individual, who has served with distinction for eighteen years in various capacities at Vanderbilt University, during which time he has wholly devoted himself to successfully helping the university become one of the premier institutions in the nation with regard to academics, student life, and athletics; and

WHEREAS, on January 31, 2019, Mr. Williams stepped down from his position of Vice Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs and Athletics Director; he has returned to teaching at Vanderbilt Law School, where he will oversee the advent of a Sports, Law, and Society Program; and

WHEREAS, David Williams arrived at Vanderbilt University in 2000, serving initially as Vice Chancellor—the first African American to hold this position at the university; he has also held the offices of General Counsel, Secretary of the Board of Trust, and a tenured professor of law; eventually, he added the roles of Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs, and Athletics Director; and

WHEREAS, during the fifteen years that Mr. Williams has been at the helm of Vanderbilt University athletics, the Commodores have won four national championships—in bowling, baseball, and women's tennis; Vanderbilt has also won more than twenty league titles and tournaments, including the men's golf and women's tennis Southeastern Conference championships and the Southland Conference Bowling Championship. Additionally, the

Vanderbilt football team has played in six bowl games, breaking a twenty-six-year drought that ended in 2008; and

WHEREAS, a hallmark of David Williams' tenure has been the expansion of academic and experiential opportunities for student athletes, including financial support for summer study abroad, an opportunity often not available to student athletes due to their demanding schedules; Vanderbilt's is the country's most comprehensive summer internship program for student athletes, in large part because of the efforts of Mr. Williams; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams has ensured that Vanderbilt student athletes are in a league of their own; they have earned a cumulative GPA of over 3.0 every year for the past thirteen years, and in the NCAA's Academic Progress Rates for the 2016-2017 academic year, a total of eleven Commodore programs finished with perfect 1,000 APR scores, while Vanderbilt football finished No. 2 in the nation; and

WHEREAS, David Williams also brought significant attention to sports' impact on society; he was instrumental in leading efforts for recognition of and reconciliation with Vanderbilt pioneers—such as Godfrey Dillard and the late Perry Wallace, the first African-American varsity basketball players at the university—and in educating the community about the university's past; and

WHEREAS, ever keeping an eye toward overall university advancement, Mr. Williams led numerous expansions, including those for Vanderbilt Stadium, Hawkins Field, Brownlee O. Currey Tennis Center, Memorial Gym, the Hendrix Dining Room, McGugin Center, the Student Recreation and Wellness Center, the golf teams' clubhouse and hitting bay, and a new bowling alley; he also headed the development of the multipurpose facility, which houses an indoor practice field and an indoor track; and

WHEREAS, a nationally recognized leader, David Williams has served on the NCAA's General Advisory Board, Academic Council, and Enforcement Task Force, as well as serving as chair of the Infractions Appeals Committee; he is a member of the NCAA's Minority Opportunities Committee; and

WHEREAS, David Williams is an active and important part of the Nashville community, as well, participating in numerous worthy organizations and serving on the boards of the Middle

Tennessee Community Foundation, Nashville Sports Council, Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, and Nashville Public Education Foundation; and

WHEREAS, a native of Detroit, Michigan, Mr. Williams received a Bachelor of Science degree in social sciences and a Master of Arts degree in education from Northern Michigan University, where he was a member of the university track team; he earned a Master of Business Administration and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Detroit, where he currently serves on the university's Board of Trust. He also holds an L.L.M. in taxation from New York University and is a member of the American Bar Association as well as the bar associations of Tennessee, Michigan, and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, throughout his many successes, he has enjoyed the love and support of his wife, Gail Carr Williams and their four children, Erika Juanita, David Williams III, Samantha Nicole, and Nicholas McKenzie; and

WHEREAS, during his time as Vice Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs and Athletics Director, David Williams has been a trailblazer, transforming the program to its greatest success in history while dramatically elevating and improving the student-athlete experience; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Williams exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, David Williams has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the sincere respect and admiration of his colleagues, students, and the Nashville community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend and congratulate David Williams II for his many accomplishments at Vanderbilt University as Vice Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs and Athletics Director, extending to him our best wishes as he continues to serve the university as a professor at Vanderbilt Law School.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.