

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 229

By Clemmons

A RESOLUTION to recognize head coach Rick Byrd and the Belmont University men's basketball team upon completing an extraordinary season.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are pleased to specially honor and commend those successful sports teams that, through their magnificent exploits, bring honor to Tennessee and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, the Belmont University men's basketball team is one such estimable team that achieved an extraordinary level of success during the 2014–2015 season, establishing a record of twenty-two wins against only ten losses on their way to claiming their second Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) Championship since joining the conference in 2012 and advancing to the NCAA Tournament; and

WHEREAS, the Belmont Bruins rolled through the OVC Tournament, prevailing over Eastern Illinois (97–64) and Eastern Kentucky (53–52) to reach the championship game against the Murray State Racers; and

WHEREAS, the Bruins came back from an eight-point deficit at the end of the first half to triumph over the Racers (88–87), with a game-winning three-point shot by Taylor Barnette in the final three seconds of the game; and

WHEREAS, after advancing to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament for the seventh time in school history, the Bruins fell to the number two nationally-ranked Virginia Cavaliers in a hard-fought game in the East Regional; and

WHEREAS, displaying great sportsmanship and outstanding character, the members of the Belmont University men's basketball team conducted themselves in a manner appropriate to

the integrity of the State of Tennessee all season and during a valiant effort in the NCAA Tournament; and

WHEREAS, the Belmont University men's basketball team includes seniors Reece Chamberlain, Holden Mobley, and Spencer Turner; juniors Craig Bradshaw and Jeff Laidig; sophomores Taylor Barnette, Evan Bradds, Caleb Chowbay, and Nick Smith; and freshmen Amanze Egekeze, Tyler Hadden, Josh Lester, Austin Luke, Mack Mercer, and Burton Sampson; and

WHEREAS, this extraordinary basketball program has been shaped and forged by nationally acclaimed coach Rick Byrd, who marks his twenty-ninth year as head coach of the Belmont Bruins this year; and

WHEREAS, a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Hall of Fame, Rick Byrd led Belmont to seven NCAA Division I tournaments in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2015, and won his 700<sup>th</sup> game as head coach on January 17, 2015; and

WHEREAS, he now holds a career record of 711 wins against only 366 losses, with a record at Belmont of 619 wins against only 311 losses; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the peerless leadership of head coach Byrd, Belmont's outstanding staff includes associate head coach Brian Ayers, assistant coach James Strong, assistant coach Mark Price, athletic trainer Paul Malloy, director of basketball operations Tyler Holloway, and administrative assistant Debbie Chenoweth; and

WHEREAS, the men's basketball team at Belmont University epitomizes all that is good in today's student-athlete, as they have achieved a premier level of success in competition while exhibiting the highest degree of character both on and off the court; and

WHEREAS, the perseverance, determination, work ethic, and talent of this group of young men not only made possible an extraordinary basketball season, but also surely bode well for their success in every future enterprise; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud the Belmont Bruins for winning the 2014–2015 OVC Championship, for qualifying

for the NCAA Tournament, and for serving as examples of the exceptional quality of

Tennessee's student-athletes; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby congratulate head coach Rick Byrd and the members of the Belmont University men's basketball team on their outstanding 2014–2015 season and wish them every success in all future endeavors.

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