

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 488

By Robinson

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Penny Hardaway upon his outstanding first season as the head coach of the University of Memphis Tigers.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are pleased to recognize a native son of Memphis who has returned to his alma mater to add to its rich basketball legacy; and

WHEREAS, Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway, a college hoops legend at then Memphis State University whose name is synonymous with basketball in the Bluff City, has completed his first season as the head coach of the University of Memphis Tigers men's basketball team; and

WHEREAS, even before he coached his first game at Memphis, Penny Hardaway's reputation and popularity reignited excitement among a fan base that was hungry for a consistent winner; when the Tigers actually began playing this season, his presence on the sideline bolstered attendance at the FedEx Forum; and

WHEREAS, Coach Hardaway led Memphis to 22 wins, an 18-3 home record at the Forum, and a fifth-place finish in the American Athletic Conference (AAC) during the regular season; the Tigers then won two games in the AAC Tournament to reach the semifinals; and

WHEREAS, qualifying for the postseason for the first time since 2014, Memphis destroyed San Diego in the National Invitation Tournament to advance to the second round; and

WHEREAS, highlights of Memphis's initial season under Coach Hardaway include a double-overtime victory over Baylor, a huge road win against Wichita State, a sold-out game versus the University of Tennessee at the Forum, a critical victory over Central Florida in the AAC tournament, and a five-win February that featured five thirty-plus-point games by senior Jeremiah Martin; and

WHEREAS, Coach Hardaway now faces the grind of the recruiting trail and the challenge of keeping Memphis's legendary basketball talent at home; so far, he has excelled in that task, as his 2019 recruiting class includes the nation's number-one recruit, who attends Memphis East High School; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Penny Hardaway attended Treadwell High School, where he was *Parade Magazine's* National High School Player of the Year; and

WHEREAS, at Memphis State, he was an All-American and a finalist for the Naismith College Player of the Year and the John R. Wooden Award; his jersey number, 25, has been retired by the school; and

WHEREAS, during his fifteen-season National Basketball Association career, Penny Hardaway was a four-time All-Star and reached the NBA Finals with the Orlando Magic; and

WHEREAS, he began his coaching journey in 2011 at Lester Middle School, where he helped a friend teach his players offense; and

WHEREAS, Coach Hardaway then immersed himself in Memphis's AAU basketball culture with Team Penny and won three TSSAA basketball titles as the head coach of Memphis East; and

WHEREAS, we are certain that Penny Hardaway will vault the Tigers to the most elite levels of college basketball competition, and we eagerly await next season; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Penny Hardaway upon his outstanding first season as the head coach of the University of Memphis men's basketball team and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success as he leads the Tigers to the promised land during the 2019-2020 season.

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