

SENATE RESOLUTION 253

By Lundberg

A RESOLUTION to honor Alexander W. Whitaker IV on the occasion of his retirement as president of King University.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those dedicated professionals who have provided valuable leadership to our institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Alexander W. Whitaker IV will conclude his tenure as King University's president at the end of the 2023-2024 academic year after eight years of proficient service as the school's chief executive; and

WHEREAS, President Whitaker came to King in 2016 with strong academic and professional credentials, broad experience in higher education and law, and a long history of success in his professional, church, and civic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Whitaker has demonstrated a commitment to integrating free, robust, and rigorous academic inquiry with orthodox Christian faith and practice as King's twenty-third president; and

WHEREAS, his tenure has seen many noteworthy gifts to the university, including the largest-ever individual alumni gift and the largest unrestricted financial gift in the school's 157-year history; and

WHEREAS, President Whitaker has strengthened the school's academic programs and standards, including the school's nursing program, which is now consistently ranked among the best in the region; and

WHEREAS, under his guidance, King has also increased the percentage of professors with terminal degrees, fostered the development of new programs, and established dual admission agreements with several regional community colleges; and

WHEREAS, President Whitaker also championed a robust free speech policy for King, making the school one of the few Christian colleges to embrace free expression as consistent with basic assumptions of the Christian faith; and

WHEREAS, President Whitaker is a member of the King University faculty and teaches undergraduate classes in American constitutional law and public international law; and

WHEREAS, Alexander W. Whitaker IV came to King from Berry College, where he was a senior officer for nearly a decade; the Berry College board of trustees granted him emeritus status upon his departure, and in 2019, he was given Berry's Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, President Whitaker served three years on Georgia's Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission as a gubernatorial appointment; he is a member of the Georgia and Virginia bars and various higher education professional associations and has served on the boards of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association, the Appalachian College Association, the Association of American Presidents of Independent Colleges and Universities, and Conference Carolinas; and

WHEREAS, he presently serves on the board of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Rotary Club of Bristol Virginia/Tennessee; he is a trustee and former board of visitors chair at Trinity School for Ministry and a trustee of Darlington School; and

WHEREAS, Alexander W. Whitaker IV began his higher education career after twenty-five years as an active-duty Navy officer and judge advocate; a designated international law specialist, he had postings at sea and ashore, with tours on both U.S. coasts and overseas in Scotland, London, and Japan; and

WHEREAS, his assignments included serving as director of Navy general civil litigation, executive officer of the Navy's largest court-martial prosecution command, and commanding officer of the Navy's southeast legal services office; and

WHEREAS, his decorations include two Legions of Merit and four Meritorious Service Medals, in addition to numerous other unit and personal awards; he retired from the U.S. Navy as a captain in 2007; and

WHEREAS, President Whitaker holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Berry College, a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Virginia; a Master of Laws degree in International and Comparative Law from Georgetown University; a Master of Arts degree in Religion from Trinity School for Ministry; and a Master of Theology degree from Duke University; and

WHEREAS, his many personal and professional accomplishments aside, he is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Maria, and their three grown children and five grandchildren, and he feels blessed by his many friendships with members of the King community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor Alexander W. Whitaker IV for his outstanding tenure as president of King University and his many contributions to higher education, thank him for his twenty-five years of service to his country, and extend to him our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors. And in conclusion, GO NAVY!

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