

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 909

By Sexton J

A RESOLUTION to honor the Lincoln Memorial University men's basketball team upon winning the South Atlantic Conference regular season and tournament championships and advancing to the championship game of the NCAA Division II Tournament.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly salute those collegiate athletes who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as true champions of whom we all can be proud; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) Railsplitters men's basketball team and Head Coach Josh Schertz have proven themselves to be the fiercest of competitors and, as such, deserving of the highest regard; and

WHEREAS, the Railsplitters, who were ranked first in the nation, dominated the South Atlantic Conference (SAC) regular season, posting an undefeated record of 22-0, and then captured the conference tournament crown by making short work of Tusculum, Newberry, and Wingate; and

WHEREAS, in the NCAA Division II Southeast Regionals, LMU, the number-one seed, easily handled Lander, Queens, and Lenoir-Rhyne to advance to the Elite Eight; and

WHEREAS, in the Elite Eight, the Railsplitters beat Barry 93-75 and bested West Liberty 103-102 in a nail biter to advance to the championship game; and

WHEREAS, LMU put up a valiant effort, but eventually lost the title game; however, the Railsplitters can still take great pride in finishing a great season second in the nation with an outstanding record of 34-3; and

WHEREAS, since arriving in Harrogate as the seventeenth head coach of the Lincoln Memorial University men's basketball program in 2008, Josh Schertz has engineered one of the more remarkable turnarounds in all of college basketball; and

WHEREAS, in his eight seasons on the sideline, Coach Schertz has led the Railsplitters to a 204-47 record (81.3% winning percentage), five SAC regular season titles, and three SAC tournament championships; and

WHEREAS, LMU has also posted seven straight 20-win seasons, six consecutive NCAA tournament appearances, and twenty-one postseason wins; and

WHEREAS, Red Auerbach College Coach of the Year in 2014, SAC Coach of the Year on multiple occasions, and finalist for Division II National Coach of the Year several times, Coach Schertz has rewritten both the school's and the SAC's record books during his tenure; and

WHEREAS, under Coach Schertz's leadership, the Railsplitters have been the number-one ranked team in the nation on four separate occasions since the beginning of the 2011-2012 season, and the 20-win seasons, SAC regular season and tournament championships, postseason wins, national ranking, and NCAA tournament appearances are all first-time occurrences for Lincoln Memorial basketball; and

WHEREAS, during the Railsplitters' quest for greatness, Coach Schertz and the team have enjoyed the invaluable assistance and support of LMU president, Dr. B. James Dawson; LMU athletic director, Matthew Green; assistant athletic director, Cameron Whicker; assistant coaches, Davis Fisher and Omar Wattad; and graduate assistant coach, Jeremiah Samarrippas; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln Memorial University and its athletic programs, especially the men's basketball program, have flourished under the vision and leadership of Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. O. V. "Pete" DeBusk, second chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Gary J. Burchett, and board member Jerry Burnette; and

WHEREAS, the members of the LMU Railsplitters epitomize 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 in all aspects of life and recording the five highest semester grade point averages in program history; and

WHEREAS, the members of the SAC champion and NCAA Division II runner up LMU Railsplitters are: Cornelius Taylor, Curtis McMillion, Tim Pierce, Curtis Webb, Hunter Spaw, Javier Gonzalez, Gerel Simmons, Trevon Shaw, Dorian Pinson, Luquon Choice, Devin Hankins, Kamaran Calhoun, Jalen Steele, Emanuel Terry, Paul Woodson, Rhondi Hackett, Nicksen Blanc, and Myles Smith; and

WHEREAS, the perseverance, determination, work ethic, and talent of this group of young men not only made possible a championship season, but also surely bode well for their future success; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud the members of the LMU Railsplitters basketball team for their outstanding performance and for serving as examples of the exceptional quality of the youth of Tennessee; 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 honor and commend Coach Josh Schertz and the members of the Lincoln Memorial University Railsplitters basketball team upon winning the South Atlantic Conference regular season and tournament championships, congratulate them on advancing to the championship game of the NCAA Division II Tournament and finishing the season second in the nation, and extend to them our best wishes for much continued success next season.

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