

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 491

By Yarbro

A RESOLUTION to honor Nicholas S. Zeppos upon his exemplary tenure as Chancellor of Vanderbilt University.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are pleased to recognize a gifted professional who, in leading one of Nashville's most prominent institutions, elevated Vanderbilt University's reputation "as one of America's most innovative, accessible and dynamic research universities" by furthering the school's commitment to making higher education inclusive and immersive; and

WHEREAS, Vanderbilt University Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos is stepping down from this important post in August 2019 after more than a decade of "incredible leadership"; he plans to take a one-year sabbatical before returning to the university's faculty as a law professor; and

WHEREAS, a leading voice in higher education at the national level, Chancellor Zeppos has established "a lasting legacy that will be impossible to replicate"; and

WHEREAS, he began serving as Chancellor in 2008 in the midst of a historic national financial crisis and navigated the university through the Great Recession; he leaves this leadership role in an era of growing prestige and accomplishment at Vanderbilt; and

WHEREAS, during his remarkable tenure, Vanderbilt's endowment has grown from a low of \$2.9 billion to \$6.4 billion; the university's pool of applicants has more than doubled, and its national rankings have climbed to new heights; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Zeppos implemented Opportunity Vanderbilt, an expansive financial aid program that eliminated need-based loans for undergraduate students; to date, his signature initiative has raised more than \$400 million for scholarships and has been recognized as the nation's best financial aid program by *The Princeton Review*; and

WHEREAS, he fulfilled a new vision for campus life that redesigned the university and city landscape with \$600 million in new construction and changed the face of West End Avenue; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Zeppos has been instrumental in planning and executing Vanderbilt's transformative residential college system, which seeks to educate the whole person; his dedication to holistic living and learning is reflected in the university's FutureVU campus development plan; and

WHEREAS, he also launched the university's Academic Strategic Planning process and the development of new programs in Jewish studies, law, economics, and genetics; and

WHEREAS, "a courageous, risk-taking, visionary leader," Chancellor Zeppos led the transition of the university and its medical center into two separate legal and financial entities in 2016, positioning them both for long-term success; and

WHEREAS, his sound financial stewardship helped the university improve its academic spaces, from the engineering and science building and the Wond'ry innovation center to the recently renovated school of nursing; and

WHEREAS, he worked with Vanderbilt's former athletic director, the late David Williams, to build the university's \$31 million indoor multipurpose facility in 2014 and a \$12 million state-of-the-art baseball facility in 2017; and

WHEREAS, in the realm of athletics, Vanderbilt has enjoyed the best run of success in school history during Chancellor Zeppos's tenure, with a national title in baseball and perennial status as a College World Series contender, national titles in women's tennis and women's bowling, and multiple bowl appearances by the football team; and

WHEREAS, a firm believer in education as the foundation for leadership and positive change, Chancellor Zeppos has received numerous accolades, including the *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine's Giving Back Award, the Jack C. Massey Award from Mental Health of America of Middle Tennessee, and five teaching awards; and

WHEREAS, he has lately served as the chair of the Association of American Universities Board of Directors; he is also a member of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics and serves on the boards of the Consortium on Financing Higher Education and Vanderbilt University Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, he previously served as co-chair of the U.S. Senate-appointed Task Force on Government Regulation of Higher Education and president of the Southeastern Conference Executive Committee; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Zeppos first arrived in Nashville in 1987 to serve as an associate professor in Vanderbilt's law school; and

WHEREAS, he eventually moved into Vanderbilt's administration, and in 2002, he was named the university's provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs; and

WHEREAS, after serving as the Chancellor's chief deputy, Nicholas Zeppos became his temporary replacement upon Chancellor Gee's departure, while the Vanderbilt board undertook the search for a permanent leader; the board discovered that the perfect candidate was already in place, and in 2008, Nicholas Zeppos became the eighth Chancellor of Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, his many professional accomplishments aside, Chancellor Zeppos is indeed fortunate to share love and companionship with his wife, Lydia A. Howarth, and their sons, Benjamin and Nicholas; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Nicholas Zeppos has worked with purpose and commitment to make Vanderbilt University an even greater institution of higher learning, and he is richly deserving of our approbation as he departs this office; 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 Nicholas S. Zeppos upon his exemplary tenure as Chancellor of Vanderbilt University, during which time he has helped build an extraordinary university that is poised for future success on many different levels, salute his unwavering dedication to higher education as a transforming force in society, and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success and happiness in his 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.