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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 537

Offered January 23, 2025

*Commending Elizabeth S. Kostelny.*

Patrons—Carr, Bulova, Cousins, Jones, McQuinn, Watts and Willett; Senators: Bagby, Deeds, Ebbin, Hashmi, McDougle and McPike

WHEREAS, Elizabeth S. Kostelny, the longstanding chief executive officer of Preservation Virginia who has guided preservation efforts in the Commonwealth for more than 30 years, retired in 2024; and

WHEREAS, after earning a graduate degree in art history in 1990 from the University of South Carolina, Elizabeth Kostelny embarked upon her career in preservation as the curator of collections at what was then the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, now Preservation Virginia; and

WHEREAS, following her success managing the collections within Preservation Virginia's portfolio, Elizabeth Kostelny was promoted to director of operations and then interim executive director before being officially named the organization's chief executive officer, becoming the first woman in history to hold that position; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Kostelny deftly managed the new responsibilities she assumed following the merger of Preservation Virginia, which had primarily acquired and preserved historic sites, and the Preservation Alliance of Virginia, which had advocated for preservation policy at the local, state, and national level; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Kostelny launched community engagement and advocacy divisions within Preservation Virginia to bolster the organization's ability to support preservation work in local communities and to advance preservation policies in government; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Kostelny has had the distinct honor of presenting the Commonwealth's history to a range of dignitaries over her career, including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and President George W. Bush during the 400th anniversary of Jamestown in 2007; and

WHEREAS, as a result of Elizabeth Kostelny's inspired leadership, Preservation Virginia's Vision 2020 Comprehensive Campaign exceeded its goal by 33 percent, allowing for essential staff hires and for longstanding priorities to be fulfilled, including a survey and online database of nearly 400 African American school sites; and

WHEREAS, for many years, Elizabeth Kostelny has been a valued voice before both the United States Congress and the General Assembly, helping to establish policies and funding that will protect the Commonwealth's history for the education and enjoyment of many future generations to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Elizabeth S. Kostelny, chief executive of Preservation Virginia, on the occasion of her retirement; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Elizabeth S. Kostelny as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her legacy of service and best wishes for a happy and rewarding retirement.