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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 55

Offered January 22, 2026

Commending the Honorable S. Bernard Goodwyn.

Patrons—Surovell, Carroll Foy and Williams Graves

WHEREAS, the Honorable S. Bernard Goodwyn concluded his service as chief justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia on December 31, 2025, leaving a legacy defined by professionalism, thoughtful reform, and an unwavering devotion to the rule of law; and

WHEREAS, Bernard Goodwyn grew up in Southampton County and was a multisport athlete, a concert band saxophone player, class president, and valedictorian at Southampton High School, distinguishing himself from a young age through his discipline, dedication to scholarship, and commitment to excellence in all his pursuits; and

WHEREAS, Bernard Goodwyn continued his education at Harvard University, from which he graduated magna cum laude with a degree in economics, then received his juris doctor degree from the University of Virginia School of Law, where he was a member of the Raven Society, editor of the Virginia Tax Review, and recipient of the prestigious Ritter Award; and

WHEREAS, before beginning his judicial service, Bernard Goodwyn practiced law with the firms McGuire, Woods, Battle & Boothe in Charlottesville and Willcox & Savage in Norfolk, where he became a partner in 1992; he served as an associate professor of the University of Virginia School of Law from 1994 to 1995, sharing his commitment to legal excellence with future jurists; and

WHEREAS, Bernard Goodwyn served the Commonwealth with distinction at every level of its judiciary, beginning as a judge of the Chesapeake General District Court in the First Judicial District of Virginia, followed by 10 years as a judge of the Chesapeake Circuit Court in the First Judicial Circuit of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Bernard Goodwyn was appointed by Governor Timothy M. Kaine as a justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia in 2007, then was unanimously elected to a full 12-year term by the General Assembly in 2008 and again in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the justices of the Supreme Court of Virginia unanimously elected Bernard Goodwyn to serve as chief justice effective January 1, 2022, entrusting him with the leadership of Virginia's highest court and the administration of statewide judicial policy; and

WHEREAS, Bernard Goodwyn's broad and impactful service to the Commonwealth included terms as chair of the Committee on District Courts, the Judicial Council of Virginia, and the Virginia Advisory Committee on Recovery Courts, Behavioral Health Dockets, and Veterans Treatment Dockets; he also chaired a subcommittee of the Virginia Supreme Court Judicial Performance Evaluation Task Force; and

WHEREAS, Bernard Goodwyn served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Conference of Chief Justices, the Virginia Code Commission, and the Editorial Board of the Virginia Bench Book for Judges and Lawyers; he participated in the Working Group for the Establishment of Guidelines for Compensation of Court-Appointed Counsel, contributed to the Joint Subcommittee Regarding Commissioners of Accounts, and provided insights to the Virginia Courts in the 21st Century Task Force; and

WHEREAS, Bernard Goodwyn has long been a champion of problem-solving and treatment-focused judicial programs, including service as a judge of the Chesapeake Drug Treatment Court Program and as co-chair of the Virginia Access to Justice Commission, which advanced the Commonwealth's commitment to fairness, accessibility, and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, the Judicial Council of Virginia awarded Bernard Goodwyn the Harry L. Carrico Outstanding Career Service Award, which recognizes a Virginia judge who demonstrates exceptional leadership in court administration and embodies integrity, courtesy, impartiality, wisdom, and humility; and

WHEREAS, among many other awards and accolades, Bernard Goodwyn also received the Virginia Bar Association's highest honor, the Gerald L. Baliles Distinguished Service Award, at the organization's annual meeting in January 2025; and

WHEREAS, throughout his tenure on the bench and especially during his service as chief justice, Bernard Goodwyn has been admired for his integrity, humility, collegiality, and steady leadership, bringing wisdom and compassion to every aspect of judicial administration and earning the respect of judges, attorneys, legislators, and citizens across the Commonwealth; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Honorable S. Bernard Goodwyn for his many years of exemplary leadership and dedicated service to the Commonwealth on the occasion of his retirement as chief justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Honorable S. Bernard Goodwyn as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude and appreciation

1/29/26 15:40

59 for his distinguished service.