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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 621

Offered May 13, 2024

Prefiled May 12, 2024

Celebrating the life of William Douglas Blevins.

Patron—O'Quinn

WHEREAS, William Douglas Blevins, a renowned position coach in the National Football League who overcame cerebral palsy to become one of the most respected kicking and punting experts in football, died on March 10, 2024; and

WHEREAS, a native of Abingdon, William Douglas "Doug" Blevins was born with cerebral palsy and confined to a wheelchair, but from a young age, he began to cultivate the positive mindset and determination that would buoy his success and inspire others throughout his life; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Abingdon High School, Doug Blevins developed a passion for football while growing up in Southwest Virginia and became an unparalleled student of the game, gaining a comprehensive understanding of kicking, punting, and special teams that he proudly shared with players of all skill levels, from middle school players to Super Bowl champions; and

WHEREAS, Doug Blevins served as a kicking specialist for his alma mater and enjoyed stints on the coaching staffs for the football teams at the University of Tennessee, East Tennessee State University, and Emory & Henry College; and

WHEREAS, Doug Blevins subsequently became the first disabled coach in the history of the National Football League (NFL) when he joined the staff of the New York Jets in 1994; he later served as a position coach for the Miami Dolphins, New England Patriots, and Minnesota Vikings and was the kicking coordinator for the NFL Europe League for five years; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his career, Doug Blevins mentored numerous professional kickers, including Adam Vinatieri, Justin Tucker, David Akers, Matt Turk, Joe Nedney, and Olindo Mare; he focused on core fundamentals to help players improve upon their own natural kicking swing and was highly admired for his ability to diagnose issues quickly and make clear, concise recommendations; and

WHEREAS, Doug Blevins emphasized the mental aspects of football and imparted his unwavering sense of positivity to his players, fellow staff members, and everyone he met; and

WHEREAS, among many accolades, Doug Blevins was nominated for the Pro Football Hall of Fame and his life story was featured on ESPN, HBO, and other media outlets; and

WHEREAS, Doug Blevins had more recently served as a volunteer assistant on the football staff at Science Hill High School in Johnson City, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Doug Blevins is survived by his children, Roman and Sarah, and their families; his mother, Linda; his father, Willis; and numerous other family members and friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Delegates hereby note with great sadness the loss of William Douglas Blevins; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of William Douglas Blevins as an expression of the House of Delegates' respect for his memory.

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