

RESOLUTION NO. RS2019-1865

A resolution honoring and commending Nicholas S. Zeppos upon his outstanding leadership and many accomplishments as Chancellor of Vanderbilt University.

WHEREAS, the members of this Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson County are pleased to recognize a gentleman who has advanced Vanderbilt University's reputation as one of America's best research universities; and

WHEREAS, Vanderbilt University Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos is stepping down from this important post in August 2019 after more than a decade of inspired leadership; 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, Vanderbilt University's pool of applicants has more than doubled (a ninety-three percent increase), and its national rankings have climbed to new heights (fourteenth in the U.S. News & World Report rankings and tenth in the Reuters assessment of the world's most innovative universities); 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 supported 10,000 students and raised more than \$400 million for scholarships, resulting in the recruitment of the most accomplished and diverse students in the university's history; and

WHEREAS, through its \$600 million planned investments in residential colleges, Vanderbilt under Chancellor Zeppos' leadership is transforming West End Avenue. The facilities under construction have deep and deliberate roots to Nashville and Tennessee. More than 300 local craftsmen and craftswomen worked on the E. Bronson Ingram project. Eighty-five percent of the subcontractors on the project were local, and ten percent were minority and women-owned enterprises. Locally sourced sandstone from Crab Orchard, Tennessee, near Crossville, was used extensively throughout the college; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Zeppos has led the development of a transformative strategic land use plan, FutureVU, which is modeling sustainable building practices and innovative transportation solutions as part of the university's commitment to support Nashville and Middle Tennessee's environmental health and vitality; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Zeppos has been a vocal advocate for making both Vanderbilt and the city of Nashville welcoming and supportive environments for all, and he has engaged with community organizations in support of this commitment, notably serving on the Board of Directors for Conexión Americas; and

WHEREAS, under his watch, the percentage of minority first-year students has nearly doubled, from 22 percent to 42.2 percent; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Zeppos has led efforts to honor and tell the story of Nashville native Perry Wallace, who broke the color barrier in Southeastern Conference basketball; and

WHEREAS, he has led investments in honoring and recognizing the contributions of African-American musicians to our city, state and nation's culture by joining the University with the National Museum of African-American Music, located in Nashville, in a long-term partnership to enrich educational and research opportunities around the musical legacy of African-American composers, performers, and supporters and their impact on American culture and musical history. The University's pledge of foundational support,

which totals \$2 million in in-kind contributions and direct financial support, will expand the museum's archival collection, contribute to innovative programming, support the completion of the facility, and more; and

WHEREAS, 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, he has strongly supported free speech and civil dialogue with a diversity of opinions and perspectives as part of his overall vision for campus culture. Chancellor Zeppos has hosted a range of globally renowned speakers from all sides of the political spectrum and a variety of disciplines, including President George W. Bush, Vice President Joe Biden, former Georgia House minority leader Stacey Abrams, former U.S. Senator Jeff Flake, and leading cancer researcher and author Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee, among many others; and

WHEREAS, in the realm of athletics, Vanderbilt has enjoyed the best run of success in school history during Chancellor Zeppos's tenure, winning five NCAA national championships (two College World Series title in baseball, a national title in women's tennis, and two national championships in women's bowling) in addition to multiple bowl appearances by the football team; and

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

WHEREAS, he eventually moved into Vanderbilt's administration, serving the University in various roles, including associate dean of the law school and associate provost for academic affairs. In 2002, he was named the university's provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs; and

WHEREAS, Nicholas Zeppos served as interim Chancellor for seven months, 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 elevated Vanderbilt University's status as one of this nation's most inclusive and most accessible institutions of higher learning, and he is deeply deserving of commendation as he departs this office.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson hereby honors and commends Nicholas S. Zeppos upon the occasion of his outstanding leadership and many accomplishments as Chancellor of Vanderbilt University, salutes his unwavering dedication to higher education and academic research, and extends to him its best wishes for much continued success and happiness in his future endeavors.

Section 2. That this resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

INTRODUCED BY:

Burkley Allen

All CM's listed
have approved
their signature.

Brett Withers

Jeff Syracuse

Fabian Bedne

Colby Sledge

Robert Swope

Freddie O'Connell

Sheri Weiner

Jeremy Elrod

Mina Johnson

Jacobia Dowell

Tanaka Vercher

Nancy VanReece

Davette Blalock

Kevin Rhoten

Sharon Hurt

Anthony Davis
Members of Council