



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Commonwealth Transportation Board

Shannon Valentine
Chairperson

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Agenda item # New Business

RESOLUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD

September 16, 2020

MOTION

Made By: Mr. Dodson, Seconded By: Mr. Rucker

Action: Motion Carried, Unanimously

Title: Commending Garland Harper

WHEREAS, Garland Harper retired on July 24, 2020, after diligently working for 45 years as an Amtrak station agent; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harper's passion for the railroad began when he was a child, watching the trains as they passed by along the James River in Lynchburg, with that passion continuing during his time as an undergraduate at the College of William and Mary, where it was his ritual to watch the trains pulling through the Williamsburg station each evening; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harper fulfilled his dream of working for the railroad after graduating from the College of William & Mary in 1975, when he took his first job as a station agent in Williamson, West Virginia, when the Chicago-Norfolk *Mountaineer* began service; and

WHEREAS, shortly thereafter, Mr. Harper returned to Lynchburg, the Hill City, at first dividing his time between Lynchburg and Charlottesville to tend to passengers traveling on the New Orleans-New York City *Crescent* and eventually dedicating his time and services in Lynchburg to passengers traveling on both the *Crescent* and then the Lynchburg-Boston *Northeast Regional* that launched in 2009 and was extended to Roanoke in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harper's service to Amtrak and the Commonwealth extended for decades and touched millions, as he welcomed residents home and assisted strangers finding their way; and

WHEREAS, before the crack of dawn on a snowy January morning in 1993, as the *Crescent* arrived at the Kemper Street Station, Mr. Harper helped a woman with a single bag

disembark the train as she searched in the darkness for her ride that had not arrived; and through a brief, calming conversation offered and provided her transportation to the home of Dr. and Mrs. Michael Valentine to meet her new grandchild whose parents are forever in Mr. Harper's debt; and

WHEREAS, his friendly and helpful manner at Lynchburg's Kemper Street Station gave rise to his reputation as an "ambassador" for the Hill City, where he greeted all with warmth, no matter the time of day or night, the circumstances, or the weather; and

WHEREAS, while Mr. Harper will now be entering a new chapter in his life, he will continue his life's passion for the railroad through his active participation in the Blue Ridge Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and in doing so, will be helping to bestow upon the old and young alike, an appreciation for the history of rail, in Virginia and nationally; and

WHEREAS, while Mr. Harper has humbly stated that he was "just really grateful to have been able to serve [his] hometown," the Board wishes to express its gratitude to Mr. Harper for all his years of service to the railroad and to the many residents and traveling strangers he has aided along the way.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the Commonwealth Transportation Board extend to Mr. Harper their highest commendation and appreciation for his years of outstanding service to Amtrak, the citizens of Lynchburg, and the Commonwealth as a whole and express their best wishes to him.

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