

Virginia Hospital Center CEO garners legislative kudos

by SCOTT McCAFFREY, Sun Gazette Newspapers March 8, 2021



Jim Cole has been president and CEO of Virginia Hospital Center since 1994. (Joanne S. Lawton/Virginia Hospital Center)

The COVID pandemic put his retirement plans on hold, and the Virginia General Assembly took time during its 2021 session to laud the service of Virginia Hospital Center CEO James Cole.

The legislative resolution, patroned by Del. Patrick Hope (D-Arlington) and supported by all members of the county delegation, lauded Cole's "steady, visionary leadership" over a three-decade career at the hospital.

During that period, the medical center – which began life as Arlington Hospital in 1944 – was expanded and augmented its services, becoming "recognized nationwide for its outstanding organizational performance and high marks in patient satisfaction," the resolution noted.

Cole had planned to retire during 2020, but those plans were delayed in order to provide stability of leadership during the pandemic.

In the resolution, he also was saluted for service on bodies such as the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association, Northern Virginia Hospital Alliance and with local organizations such as CrisisLink, CrossLink and the Arlington Free Clinic.

Also among those receiving legislative accolades from the General Assembly, patroned by Hope:

- M. Jay Farr, who served as Arlington police chief from 2015 to 2020 after rising through the ranks, was honored for his service at the local and regional levels.

“Under Jay Farr’s leadership, the Arlington County Police Department maintained a focus on community policing and developed strong relationships with local residents and businesses; he oversaw the creation of the Arlington Restaurant Initiative to increase safety at local nightlife and entertainment venues,” the resolution noted.

- Charlene Bickford, an historian and leader in local Democratic circles, was honored for her 23 years of service as a member of the Arlington Electoral Board. Bickford retired from the post last December.
- Nancy Renfro, who died last Sept. 27, was honored for her service as president of the Organized Women Voters of Arlington for 23 years, as well as her long service as an educator and administrator.
- Art Gosling, who served as superintendent of Arlington Public Schools for 12 years beginning in 1985, was memorialized for his service to the community.

After retiring in 1997, Gosling – who died last Sept. 10 – served as president of Encore Learning, which provides educational classes and other support services to local seniors.

“Throughout his career, Art Gosling was a champion for women in the field of education and a trusted mentor to many other school principals and administrators who was well known for his steadfast leadership and unfailing commitment to lifelong learning,” the resolution noted.

- Linda Kelleher was honored for a career in senior care and affordable housing over the course of 46 years, including service as executive director of Culpepper Garden until her retirement last year.

Kelleher, who previously served in a senior position at the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, was tapped to lead the Arlington Retirement Housing Corp. – parent of Culpepper Garden – in October 2015. Her efforts were devoted to “ensuring that senior members of the Arlington community had options for affordable independent living and assisted living,” noted the General Assembly resolution.

- The House of Delegates passed a resolution honoring James Schwartz, who had a lengthy career in the Arlington government culminating as service as a deputy county manager, a post from which he retired in 2021.

Schwartz joined the Arlington County Fire Department in 1984, moving up the ranks to serve as its chief from 2004 to 2015. During the 9/11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, he served as incident commander on site.

Schwartz also was active in regional and national threat-mitigation efforts.

https://www.insidenova.com/news/people/virginia-hospital-center-ceo-garners-legislative-kudos/article_48603200-7f59-11eb-b29c-abff3c115644.html