

**RESOLUTION HONORING 2024 UT PROSIM MEDAL RECIPIENTS
WILLIS P. BLACKWOOD '72 AND MARY N. BLACKWOOD '73**

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech is very proud to recognize among its most esteemed alumni Mr. Willis P. Blackwood, a member of the class of 1972 who received his bachelor of science degree in business administration from the Pamplin College of Business, and Mrs. Mary Nolen Blackwood, a member of the class of 1973 who received her bachelor of science degree in Psychology from the College of Science, both of whom have been loyal and enthusiastic supporters of the university; and

WHEREAS, Willis and Mary Blackwood have equally contributed their collective time, talent, and treasure to help create a better Virginia Tech, while also standing at the helm of a living family legacy that embodies the true spirit of Ut Prosim – *That I May Serve*; and

WHEREAS, Willis and Mary Blackwood are extraordinary alumni whose individual offerings of leadership, service, and philanthropy create a combined and distinctive force at their beloved alma mater; and

WHEREAS, Mary Blackwood was the first of seven siblings in her family to attend college, carries the distinction of being a founding member and the first female chair of the College of Arts and Sciences Roundtable, and remains an active member of the College of Science Dean's Roundtable Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, Willis Blackwood serves as an active voice in university volunteer leadership roles that include the Real Estate Industry Advisory Board and the Pamplin Advisory Council, as well as previous service on the Virginia Tech Athletic Fund Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, Willis and Mary Blackwood each completed separate terms on the Virginia Tech Foundation Board of Directors and were past campaign volunteers for the Invent the Future campaign; and

WHEREAS, the Blackwoods have consistently believed in the value of giving back, leading by example philanthropically to create opportunities for Virginia Tech students to be successful in their chosen careers and paths of study, as well as being recognized as members of the Ut Prosim Society at the President's Circle level, in addition to the Legacy, 1872, and Pylon societies while also carrying the distinction of being named Foremost Benefactors of the institution; and

WHEREAS, Willis and Mary Blackwood are members of a multi-generational Hokie family who also serve their alma mater and communities; and Willis and Mary, in concert with their children, Morgan and Nolen, were the generous and visionary leaders who created the Blackwood Department of Real Estate, which continues to gain recognition as one of the top real estate programs in the nation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that in recognition of Willis and Mary Blackwood's many years of leadership and notable service to the university and to their community, the Board of Visitors of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University confers upon Willis P. Blackwood and Mary Nolen Blackwood its highest award, the Ut Prosim Medal.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the resolution conferring the 2024 Ut Prosim Medal to Willis P. Blackwood and Mary Nolen Blackwood be approved.

April 9, 2024

**RESOLUTION HONORING 2024 UNIVERSITY DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD RECIPIENT DR. GLADYS B. WEST, CLASS OF 2000**

WHEREAS, Dr. Gladys B. West is a class of 2000 alumna of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, receiving her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Public Administration/Public Affairs; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gladys West is an unsung hero and hidden figure whose early work and remarkable contributions to computational modeling and data-driven science laid the foundations for the development of the Global Positioning System commonly referred to as GPS; and

WHEREAS, Dr. West has had a long, distinguished, and exemplary career that serves as a testament to her personal drive and skill, especially at a time when women, and more particularly, women of color, faced overwhelming barriers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and

WHEREAS, Dr. West has made significant contributions to the world at large, persevering and emerging as a beacon of excellence by sharing her knowledge at the U.S. Naval Weapons Laboratory in Dahlgren, Virginia, beginning in 1956, and spanning an unparalleled 40-year career in the U.S. military; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gladys West programmed carefully designed computational algorithms that led to the development of an exceptionally precise geodetic Earth model, which was foundational for what the world knows and relies upon daily as GPS; work that paved the way for countless technological innovations and applications ranging from the navigation systems in our phones to the precision mapping required in various fields such as aviation, agriculture, and disaster management; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gladys West is an exemplar of Virginia Tech's drive to push the boundaries of knowledge and foster innovation, and remains a pioneer who defied convention and made invaluable impacts on society through her outsized contributions to the field of computational modeling; and

WHEREAS, Dr. West has made a global impact through the core values of hard work, determination, and vision that has resulted in professional success and worldwide acclaim;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that with great pride and in recognition of her professional accomplishments, service, leadership, and commitment to making the world a better place in ways that bring honor to her profession and to her alma mater, the Board of Visitors of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University confers the University Distinguished Achievement Award for 2024 to Dr. Gladys B. West.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the resolution conferring the 2024 University Distinguished Achievement Award to Dr. Gladys B. West be approved.

April 9, 2024