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By:  Anderson H.R. No. 644

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, A milestone in the history of Baylor University athletics was realized on April 5, 2021, when the men's basketball team earned its first NCAA Division I national championship; and

WHEREAS, The title game victory closed out an unforgettable year that began with a 17-game winning streak; the Bears went on to secure their inaugural Big 12 Conference regular-season crown after posting a 13-1 league record, and the team realized another first when it entered the NCAA tournament as a No. 1 seed; and

WHEREAS, Playing in the tournament's South Region, Baylor notched commanding March Madness victories over Hartford, Wisconsin, and Villanova before besting Arkansas to punch its ticket to the Final Four for the first time since 1950; matching up against the University of Houston in the semifinals, the Bears showcased their precision shooting and stifling defense to prevail 78-59 and secure a berth in the championship contest; and

WHEREAS, Taking the floor at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis for the marquee title game, Baylor faced the undefeated and top-ranked squad from Gonzaga University; the Bears were undaunted and took charge from the opening tip-off; jumping out to a 9-0 lead and a 47-37 halftime advantage, they continued to dominate down the stretch, never allowing Gonzaga to come closer than nine points; emerging victorious by the final score of 86-70, the Bears hoisted the championship trophy and closed out a storybook year with an overall record of 28 wins and only two losses; and

WHEREAS, Baylor was led by Jared Butler, the Final Four Most Outstanding Player, who scored 22 points in the finale; notable honors were also claimed by Davion Mitchell, who was named both the Naismith and National Association of Basketball Coaches Defensive Player of the Year; the Bears also received valuable contributions throughout the season from the other members of the roster: Flo Thamba, L. J. Cryer, Jordan Turner, Adam Flagler, Mark Vital, Jackson Moffatt, Jonathan Tchamwa Tchatchoua, Matthew Mayer, MaCio Teague, Zach Loveday, Mark Paterson, and Dain Dainja; these determined athletes were ably guided by head coach Scott Drew, who won the Associated Press and Big 12 Coach of the Year awards and is the youngest active coach in college basketball to win a national championship; vital support was also provided by associate head coach Jerome Tang, assistant coaches Alvin Brooks III and John Jakus, and the other members of the Baylor staff; and

WHEREAS, Playing with exemplary skill, determination, and teamwork, the Baylor Bears realized their season-long goal of becoming national champions, and their achievement will forever be a proud memory for the university's loyal fans throughout Texas and beyond; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby congratulate the Baylor University men's basketball team on winning the 2021 NCAA Division I national championship and extend to the team's players, coaches, and staff sincere best wishes for continued success; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for the Bears as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.