PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University (OLLI Mason) in the City of Fairfax has become one of the premier lifelong learning institutes in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Learning in Retirement Institute was founded in 1991 as the brainchild of the Fairfax County Commission on Aging and visionary Kathryn Brooks, who wanted to establish educational and social opportunities for a growing base of active seniors in Fairfax County, an age wave expected to continue well into the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, the Institute soon became affiliated with George Mason University as part of Mason’s strategic vision to extend its learning mission into the community, including seniors interested in maintaining an active intellectual life; and

WHEREAS, the Institute later was generously endowed by the Bernard Osher Foundation of California, a non-profit that has through generous gifts strengthened the quality of life for older persons in the United States through education and the arts; and

WHEREAS, OLLI Mason’s mission is “to offer to its members learning opportunities in a stimulating environment in which adults can share their talents, experiences and skills, explore new interests, discover and develop latent abilities, engage in intellectual and cultural pursuits, and socialize with others of similar interests;” and

WHEREAS, by all measures, OLLI Mason has fulfilled its goals by what started three decades ago as a member-run, Learning-in-Retirement center with 100 members, operating and teaching out of one room in Mason’s Commerce II Building, has burgeoned today into a robust, first-rate educational and social Institute with 1100 members; and

WHEREAS, OLLI Mason currently offers retirees not only in the City of Fairfax, but in numerous locations in Northern Virginia, over 600 courses and special events over four terms each year across three campuses, from arts to zoology, religion to science, with a topic to satisfy anyone without the pressures of homework, exams, or grades; and

WHEREAS, the over-50 population in Northern Virginia is growing at an accelerated rate, living longer and healthier lives, and the City of Fairfax and policymakers at all levels are working vigorously to develop programs and services to help these persons continue to participate more fully in their communities; and

WHEREAS, an unprecedented number of these older Americans in the City of Fairfax are sheltered at home today, avoiding the serious health risks associated an historic COVID-19 pandemic gripping this country since March 2020, and, in response, OLLI Mason converted to online programming, offering an intellectual and social lifeline to those who have been bored and isolated for months as they safely ride out the pandemic;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, David L. Meyer, Mayor of the City of Fairfax, in concert with all the members of the Fairfax City Council and the citizens of our City and the greater Fairfax community, commend the

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University

For its resounding success in serving the educational and social needs of retirees in the City of Fairfax and beyond. The City of Fairfax lauds OLLI, George Mason University, and the County of Fairfax for its vision decades ago to address the critical need for programs that better meet the needs of, expand opportunities for, and enhance the quality of life for retirees in Northern Virginia. The City of Fairfax congratulates the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University on its 30-year anniversary and looks forward to many more years of programming success.

Done this twenty-sixth day of April 2021.

Attest:

Mayor

City Clerk