

State of Vermont Senate Chamber



Montpelier, Vermont

Senate Concurrent Resolution

By Senators Campion and Sears,

By Representatives Bates of Bennington, Browning of Arlington, Carroll of Bennington, Corcoran of Bennington, Durfee of Bennington, James of Manchester, Morrissey of Bennington and Sullivan of Bennington

S.C.R. 12. Senate concurrent resolution honoring former Representative and Senator Seth B. Bongartz for his impressive leadership as president of Hildene.

Whereas, Seth Bongartz graduated from Burr & Burton Academy, Skidmore College, and after an interlude as a woodworker, State Representative, State Senator, and board member of the Nature Conservancy and the Ottaquechee Land Trust, he earned a law degree at Case Western Reserve University School of Law, and

Whereas, for over a decade, he worked at a private law firm in Bennington where environmental law was an important component of his legal practice, and

Whereas, in 1904, Robert Lincoln, the only surviving son of President Abraham Lincoln, purchased acreage in Manchester and had built a large “ancestral home” for himself and his wife, and he applied the name Hildene to the property, and

Whereas, in the 1970s, after the last Hildene-residing Lincoln descendant died, the Manchester community succeeded in halting Hildene’s sale to developers, and a new nonprofit organization, the Friends of Hildene, was formed to restore this magnificent homestead, and

Whereas, in 2002, Hildene hired as its president Seth Bongartz, a man truly dedicated to the organization’s core values of integrity, perseverance, and civic responsibility and to its action agenda of land conservation, historic preservation, sustainability, and civil civic discourse, and

Whereas, Seth Bongartz has stated that placing Hildene on the international tourist map has been his greatest accomplishment, and

Whereas, in 2007, the restored historic carriage barn was opened as a welcome center and museum store, creating a spacious entryway and a new revenue resource, and

Whereas, in 2011, the Many Voices exhibit, featuring a restored Sunbeam Pullman Car, debuted, and it tells the racially charged story of the Pullman railroad porters, an especially symbolic example of civil civic discourse, as Robert Lincoln was president and board chair of the Pullman Palace Car Company, and

Whereas, in December 2019, Seth Bongartz will complete his innovative and successful 18-year tenure as president of Hildene, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors former Representative and Senator Seth B. Bongartz for his impressive leadership as president of Hildene, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Seth Bongartz and to Hildene.