

PROCLAMATION
of the
Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners
Honoring the Town of Sylva for Its Contributions to
Major League Baseball

WHEREAS, the Town of Sylva, North Carolina, nestled in the heart of the Great Smoky Mountains, has long been a community that values hard work, perseverance, and the pursuit of excellence; and

WHEREAS, Jackson County has produced multiple individuals who have reached the highest levels of professional baseball, leaving a lasting legacy in Major League Baseball (MLB); and

WHEREAS, Johnny Oates, born in Sylva in 1946, played 11 seasons in the MLB as a catcher for five teams including the Baltimore Orioles and New York Yankees. Known for his defensive prowess, Oates later became a celebrated manager, leading the Texas Rangers to three American League West titles and earning American League Manager of the Year in 1996. He is honored in both the Texas Rangers and Baltimore Orioles Halls of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Cal Raleigh, a graduate of Smoky Mountain High School, has emerged as the MLB premier catchers. A switch-hitter for the Seattle Mariners, Raleigh became the first catcher in MLB history to hit 93 home runs in his first four seasons, won both the Gold Glove and Platinum Glove Awards in 2024, and was named an All-Star and Home Run Derby Champion in 2025; and

WHEREAS, Zebby Matthews, also a Smoky Mountain High School alumnus, made his MLB debut with the Minnesota Twins on August 13, 2024, delivering an impressive performance with five strikeouts and no walks over five innings. A product of Western Carolina University, Matthews represents the next generation of Sylva's baseball excellence; and

WHEREAS, these athletes have not only represented the community on the national stage but have also served as role models for young people in our community, demonstrating that with dedication and determination, even the loftiest goals are within reach; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners do hereby recognize and celebrate the community's proud legacy of producing Major League Baseball talent and encourages continued support for youth sports and community pride.

Adopted this 24th day of July 2025.

Johnny Phillips, Mayor

Attest:

Amanda W. Murajda, Town Clerk