

House Resolution 876

By: Representatives Buckner of the 137th, Smith of the 139th, Reese of the 140th, and Hugley of the 141st

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Robert "Bob" Wadkins, Sr.; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished citizens
3 with the passing of Robert "Bob" Wadkins, Sr., on January 11, 2024; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Robert "Bob" Wadkins, Sr., was the first chief public defender in the
5 Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit and served the Columbus area in that position until he retired
6 in 2013 to go into practice with his son; and
- 7 WHEREAS, legislation passed during the 2003 Georgia General Assembly session created
8 regional public defender offices to pay attorneys market rates for providing legal
9 representation to indigent defendants who couldn't afford to pay their own lawyers; and
- 10 WHEREAS, two years after the state law was passed, United States Magistrate Judge
11 Stephen Hyles chaired the committee that picked Wadkins from 12 applicants to run the first
12 judicial circuit public defender office, and the committee chose Wadkins unanimously; and
- 13 WHEREAS, he built the office from scratch, and his humor, confidence and no-nonsense
14 approach to criminal defense made him more than adequate for the work he faced; and

15 WHEREAS, he had a varied experience before becoming a lawyer, from attending the
16 Juilliard School of Music, as a baritone voice major, to joining the United States Army and
17 serving as an infantry engineer in the Vietnam War, where he was wounded three times, and
18 he brought that talent and bravery to the courtroom where he actually sang a closing
19 argument one time; and

20 WHEREAS, he gave inspiration to many through his high ideals, morals, and deep concern
21 for his fellow citizens, and the devotion, patience, and understanding he demonstrated to his
22 family and friends were admired by others; and

23 WHEREAS, a compassionate and generous man, Robert "Bob" Wadkins, Sr., will long be
24 remembered for his love of family, friendship, and community and will be missed by all who
25 had the great fortune of knowing him.

26 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
27 the members of this body join in honoring the life and memory of Robert "Bob" Wadkins,
28 Sr., and express their deepest and most sincere regret at his passing.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
30 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the
31 family of Robert "Bob" Wadkins, Sr.