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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

SENATE RESOLUTION

**EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE JUSTICE
DONALD FRANCIS SHEA, RETIRED ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE RHODE ISLAND
STATE SUPREME COURT**

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, McCaffrey, Goodwin, Algieri, and Conley

Date Introduced: January 15, 2020

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1 WHEREAS, The Honorable Donald Francis Shea was born in Pawtucket, on September
2 14, 1925, to the late Edward and Lucy Shea. He was predeceased by his wife, Ursula Shea, and
3 siblings, Leonard Shea, Natalie Blais, and Daniel Shea; and

4 WHEREAS, After graduating from high school, Justice Shea enlisted in the United States
5 Navy in 1943, and served our nation with honor and distinction during World War II in both the
6 European and Pacific theatres, participating in both the Invasion of Normandy and the Invasion of
7 Okinawa; and

8 WHEREAS, After receiving his honorable discharge, Justice Shea enrolled in Providence
9 College, attaining a Bachelor's degree in 1950. He then moved to Washington, D.C., with his
10 wife, Ursula, to attend law school at Georgetown University. After attaining his law degree, he
11 practiced in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region before returning to Rhode Island; and

12 WHEREAS, Justice Shea continued to practice law in Rhode Island while becoming
13 active in state government. In 1960, he was elected to represent the Riverside neighborhood of
14 East Providence in the Rhode Island House of Representatives, where he and his wife raised their
15 family. Justice Shea served with distinction for eight years before leaving to become the
16 Executive Assistant to Governor Frank Licht; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1972, Justice Shea began his distinguished career as a jurist when he was
18 appointed to the Rhode Island Superior Court. He was elevated to the Rhode Island State
19 Supreme Court in 1981, and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1995. Throughout his

1 career, Justice Shea conducted himself with the utmost integrity and was well-respected and
2 admired for his vast knowledge and understanding of complicated legal issues and their
3 intersection with the law. He also proudly served as a mentor to innumerable young and aspiring
4 lawyers; and

5 WHEREAS, Justice Shea gave much of his time in service to numerous charitable
6 endeavors. He served as a volunteer with hospice patients and families with the Society of St.
7 Vincent de Paul, and provided great comfort to many suffering people. He was also a passionate
8 advocate for the disabled as a member of the Summit Club of East Providence, and played a
9 crucial role, along with his friend and colleague, Justice Weisberger, in founding the Roger
10 Williams Law School. Justice Shea also served on the President's Council at Providence College;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Justice Shea is survived by his children, Donald Shea and his wife,
13 Meredith, Michaela Shea McInnis, Christopher Shea and his wife, Brenda, Sara Shea McConnell
14 and her husband, Jack, and Ellen Shea Reinhardt and her husband, Frederick. He also leaves
15 behind eleven grandchildren, Michael Shea and his wife, Rocio, Meghan Shea, Julia and
16 Stephanie McInnis, Caitlin Shea, Catherine, Margaret and John McConnell, Jessica Shea, Emily
17 Shea and her husband, Morgan Dorn, and Samuel Reinhardt and two great-grandchildren, Henry
18 and Meadowlark Shea. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews; now, therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
20 hereby expresses its deepest condolences to the Shea Family on the passing of the Honorable
21 Justice Donald Francis Shea, Retired Associate Justice of the Rhode Island State Supreme Court;
22 and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
24 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Donald E. Shea, Michaela Shea McInnis,
25 Christopher Shea, Sara Shea McConnell and Ellen Shea Reinhardt.

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