

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 38

By Freeman

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Bill Freeman of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of William H. "Bill" Freeman, who built a business empire, which included real estate, and was a leading fundraiser for the Democratic Party; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman cofounded Freeman Webb Company, a multifamily real estate investment and management firm with over 18,000 rental homes and apartments across Tennessee, Missouri, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Alabama, more than 9,000 of which are in the Nashville area; Freeman Webb earned the title of "best company to work for" year after year; and

WHEREAS, a man of impeccable character and a true luminary in Nashville, Bill Freeman thwarted a burgeoning extortion scheme in the Bellevue community in the late 1980s; he made a bid for mayor in 2015 and considered a run for governor in 2018; and

WHEREAS, he was also a staunch supporter of the Democratic Party, backing the 2020 Biden-Harris presidential campaign and Phil Bredesen's 2002 and 2006 campaigns for governor; over the years, he gave more than \$7.8 million in direct federal contributions to mostly Democratic candidates and committees, including more than \$1.1 million to the Democratic National Committee; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman, himself a pilot, served on the Metro Nashville Airport Authority Board for eight years under three mayors before stepping down in March 2024; in 2023, he retired from running Freeman Webb, passing the torch to his son, Bob Freeman; and

WHEREAS, he also owned the alt-weekly *Nashville Scene* and business-focused *Nashville Post*, purchasing the publications in 2018 to ensure they remained local rather than being sold to a New York investment firm, as had been considered by the previous owners; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman's public service further included serving on the boards of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Tennessee State University, and the J. William Fulbright Scholarship Awards; and

WHEREAS, Bill Freeman was devoted to his hometown neighborhood of Donelson, where he and his wife had been elementary students together, and was a longtime member of Hillsboro Presbyterian Church; and

WHEREAS, he was also deeply devoted to his family and always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman is survived by his beloved wife of fifty years, Barbara Tinsley "Babs" Freeman; three sons, the Honorable James Robert (Rachel) Freeman, Corporal William Harvey Freeman, USMC, Retired, (Eucaris Carlino), and Michael Edgar (Kimberly) Freeman; and seven grandchildren, Katie Freeman, Grace Freeman, Will Freeman, Mikey Freeman, Hazel Freeman, Ella Freeman, and Elena Freeman; and

WHEREAS, he is further survived by his sisters, Beth Freeman (David) Moore, Barbara "Babs" Freeman-Loftis (Thomas N. Loftis, Sr.), Brenda S. Freeman (Jeff Jones), and Bonnie Freeman (Tim) Endsley, as well as a host of nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Louis Freeman and Virginia Margaret Gannon Freeman, and his sister, Rebecca Freeman; and

WHEREAS, throughout his many worthy endeavors in both public and private life, Bill Freeman distinguished himself as a beacon of kindness and wisdom and a stalwart community leader; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman was an incredible force for good, and Nashville, the State of Tennessee, and our nation are better for his tenacity, commitment, and willingness to step up and serve; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should pay tribute to the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of William H. "Bill" Freeman, reflecting fondly upon his enduring legacy in Nashville and beyond.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend our sympathy and condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Freeman.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.