

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 57

By Stevens

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Colonel Thomas L. Hickerson upon his induction into the Air Force Cybersecurity Operations and Support Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, the members of the General Assembly take great pleasure in paying tribute to those exemplary individuals who have devoted their careers and themselves to service in the United States Armed Forces and have earned the highest levels of recognition for their patriotism and performance; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Thomas L. Hickerson, (Ret), an esteemed veteran of thirty years of service in the United States Air Force, was selected as a member of the 2021 class of the Air Force Cybersecurity Operations and Support Hall of Fame, with induction April 2023; and

WHEREAS, born in Chattanooga in 1947, Thomas L. Hickerson graduated from the University of Tennessee (UT) with honors in electrical engineering in 1970; he was commissioned through the ROTC program, and was recognized by the Tickle College of Engineering as a UT Alumnus who served the nation through a period of change and challenge in a November 2021 article and press release; and

WHEREAS, during his distinguished career, Colonel Hickerson set the standard for command, control, communications, and computer support for the warfighter in the design and construction of a Hardened Tactical Air Control Center in Korea to provide all communications resources necessary to defend the area; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Hickerson exercised real-time control over the Department of Defense satellite communications and US satellites as commander of the 1999th Communications Squadron during the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Hickerson served on the Air Staff in the Pentagon, as Chief IT Architect (technically the first Chief Technical Officer) for computers, where he developed the standards defining the hardware, networking, software, and user interface for not only desktop computers but also networks and their security; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Hickerson represented the United States in the international arena as the Chief Communication (J6) in the Joint Task Force South West Asia, leading the coalition of nations containing aggression from Saddam Hussein, and as the Deputy Chief Communicator of the Commander in Chief on the Pacific staff, where he exercised international leadership in crisis and coordinated communications for exercises and emergencies theater wide; and

WHEREAS, after retirement, Colonel Hickerson again rose to serve the nation in the ultimate crisis of the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, when, operating the backbone communications of the Pentagon, he gathered volunteers, established a planning cell, and walked back into the Pentagon that afternoon as it burned, restored communications, saved data, and began the process of restoration; and

WHEREAS, as the State of Tennessee Executive Director of Operations and Disaster Planning, Colonel Hickerson built award-winning statewide infrastructure, added a backup data center, and implanted cybersecurity planning; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Hickerson continued to serve Tennessee in his local community as past first vice president and a board member of the Tennessee Fisher House Foundation and president of the Military Ministry at FUMC. He led locally as president of the Stones River Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, and he served as president of the Military Officers Association of America, vice chairman of the Rutherford County Republican Party, chairman of the Smyrna La Vergne Food Bank, chairman of the Town of Smyrna Beer Board, member of the Town of Smyrna Planning Commission, president of the Stones River Chapter of

the Military Officers of America Association (MOAA), and Commander of American Legion Post 144; and

WHEREAS, Governor Bill Lee saw fit, on behalf of the people of Tennessee, to appoint Colonel Hickerson as an Aide de Camp; and

WHEREAS, Colonel Thomas L. Hickerson's lifetime of accomplishments deserves recognition as a member of the Air Force Cybersecurity Operations and Support Hall of Fame and communicates the importance of his dedication, innovation, citizen services, and support to America; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate Colonel Thomas L. Hickerson, (Ret), upon his induction into the Air Force Cybersecurity Hall of Fame, thank him for his years of devoted service to his country and the State of Tennessee, and wish him the best for every future success.

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.