

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 219

By Sanderson

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Joseph Atnip for his honorable service to the people of Tennessee as president of the Tennessee District Public Defenders Conference.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy attorney is Joseph "Joe" Atnip of Greenfield, who was elected to serve as the District Public Defender for the Twenty-Seventh Judicial District, which is comprised of Obion and Weakley counties, in 1990, and who has served the citizens of that district with distinction for twenty-six years; and

WHEREAS, Joe Atnip was born in Henderson in 1955; he graduated from Germantown High School in 1973 and earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1979. Mr. Atnip obtained his Doctor of Jurisprudence at Vanderbilt University School of Law in 1982, and he was admitted to the bar by order of the Tennessee Supreme Court that same year; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Atnip served in the United States Navy from 1975 to 1978, was a squad leader on the U.S. Navy Presidential Honor Guard Drill Team, and performed for domestic and foreign dignitaries at the White House, Arlington National Cemetery, and other venues in the Nation's capital; after returning to civilian life, he continued to perform a one-man rifle routine and deliver patriotic speeches for schools and community groups and at special events; and

WHEREAS, during the campaign for his first election to the office of Public Defender, his former law partner, the Honorable Roy Herron, who served in the Tennessee State Senate, was

heard to comment that, "Joe may be the first Tennessean since Davy Crockett to win an election because of his skill with a rifle."; and

WHEREAS, today, Mr. Atnip continues to speak and perform his impressive rifle drill routine and has visited with and instructed the U.S. Navy Drill Team in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Atnip served as city judge for the Town of Greenfield and the Town of Sharon; he is a longstanding member of the Greenfield Rotary Club and has served as the club's president. He is a former president of the Weakley County Bar Association, a former member of the board of the Tennessee Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and a former member of a number of local boards and commissions, including the 27th Judicial District Drug Court and Community Corrections; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Atnip also taught for a semester at the University of Tennessee at Martin as an adjunct professor, has actively mentored in local schools, assisting the Junior Beta Club in state and national competitions, and participates as an actor in the cemetery walk during the annual Dresden Iris Festival; he also helped coach his daughters' junior basketball and softball teams; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Atnip lives on a farm in the ancestral home built by his great-great-grandfather, where he raises a large, organically grown garden, which includes fruit trees, pecan trees, strawberries, muscadines, and his beloved blueberries; Mr. Atnip named and helped to propagate an heirloom tomato known as "Tennessee Britches," which is now commercially available; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Atnip is an accomplished beekeeper who generously shares his bounty with friends and family; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Atnip preached for a small country church for twenty years; and

WHEREAS, recognized as a leader by his peers and colleagues, Joe Atnip is currently serving his first tenure as president of the Tennessee District Public Defenders Conference, having previously served as vice president, secretary-treasurer, and member of the executive committee and a number of other committees, including the audit committee; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary tenure as president of the Tennessee District Public Defenders Conference, Mr. Atnip has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to this State; and

WHEREAS, Joe Atnip epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Atnip is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Kathy, whom he married in 1983, and their children: Katie, the first Weakley Countian to graduate from Harvard; and Becky, who owns and operates a guest ranch in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Joe Atnip is also grateful for his witty, entertaining grandchildren, Lloyd and Dale; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Joe Atnip has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of members of the bar and bench and his community alike, bringing out the best in everyone he meets; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Joseph Atnip for his meritorious service to the good people of the State of Tennessee as president of the Tennessee District Public Defenders Conference 2016-2017 and extend to him our best wishes 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.