

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 251

By Hawk

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Representative Zane C. Whitson, Jr. of Unicoi County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of our friend and former colleague Zane C. Whitson, Jr., a member of the House of Representatives of the 91<sup>st</sup>-102<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee General Assemblies, who served from 1978 until 2002; and

WHEREAS, Zane C. Whitson, Jr. was an exemplary and conscientious public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens, especially his constituents in the 5<sup>th</sup> House District, in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, an accomplished educator, coach, and businessman, Mr. Whitson enjoyed success in every endeavor he undertook, be it teaching students to strive for excellence in the classroom, turning young athletes into champions on the basketball court, or recruiting industries and businesses to beautiful Unicoi County; and

WHEREAS, born October 28, 1933 in Banner Elk, North Carolina, Zane C. Whitson, Jr. was the son of Zane C. and Carrie Jack Whitson and attended primary and secondary school in Unicoi County; and

WHEREAS, an outstanding athlete, he attended Mars Hill College on a basketball scholarship, earning an associate's degree before accepting an athletic scholarship to Florida Southern University where he received his bachelor of science degree in physical education; and

WHEREAS, understanding the value and importance of education, Zane Whitson would earn two graduate degrees during his lifetime, a master's degree in physical education from

the University of Mississippi in 1963 and a master's degree in administration from East Tennessee State University in 1975; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Whitson proudly answered his country's call to duty, serving in the United States Army from 1956-59 as a member of the U.S. Army Reserve, where he attained the rank of Private before receiving his honorable discharge; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, Zane Whitson began his teaching and coaching career at Washington College Academy, and in 1960, he returned to Union County High School and served the Unicoi County School System in a variety of capacities, including teacher, basketball coach, and assistant principal; and

WHEREAS, a highly successful basketball coach for the Unicoi High Blue Devils, Zane Whitson was named Basketball Coach of the Year in the Big Seven Conference for both the 1963-64 and the 1964-65 seasons; and

WHEREAS, as an education professional, Mr. Whitson was a member of the National Education Association, the Tennessee Education Association, and the Unicoi County Education Association; and

WHEREAS, retiring from education in 1984, Mr. Whitson then served as Director of Economic and Community Development for Unicoi County, working as the industrial recruiter for Unicoi County until 2006; and

WHEREAS, an avid golfer and member of the Buffalo Valley Golf Club, Zane Whitson was also actively involved in his community, holding membership in the Erwin Kiwanis Club in addition to being a 32<sup>nd</sup> Degree Mason and member of the Unicoi Masonic Lodge #681 of the Free and Accepted Masons; and

WHEREAS, he was also a member of the Watauga Commandery #25 of the Knights Templar, Jericho Shriners Temple Imperial Council A.A.O.N.M.S. of Kingsport #3012, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, and the Farm Bureau; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the House of Representatives, Zane Whitson was a prominent member of the Commerce Committee, the Transportation Committee, the Education Committee, and the Finance, Ways and Means Committee, serving as an officer of the Expenditures and Revenue Subcommittee; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as a member of the Tennessee General Assembly, Zane Whitson served as Chairman of the Northeast Tennessee Caucus and was a key member of the Select Oversight Committee on Education, the Select Committee on Children and Youth, and the Select Oversight Committee on TennCare; and

WHEREAS, serving on the Comprehensive Select Committee on Education in the early 1980s, Representative Whitson played an integral part in the Better Schools initiative of the Alexander administration, sponsoring the legislation that established alternative schools in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, highly regarded by his colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Representative Whitson worked tenaciously to aide the people of his district, ensuring that highway projects such as the completion of Interstate 26 were on schedule to provide yet another tool to attract more jobs and benefits to the community; and

WHEREAS, during his legislative career he received numerous accolades, including being named Legislator of the Year on three different occasions. He received this prestigious honor from the Tennessee County Officials Association in 1992, the Tennessee Association of Community Action Agencies in 1996-1997, and the Private Colleges of Tennessee in 1998-1999; and

WHEREAS, Zane Whitson was an active and devout member of Unicoi United Methodist Church, which he served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, a devoted family man, Mr. Whitson is survived by his beloved wife, Diane Neas Whitson, one son, Zane C. Whitson, III, his daughter and son-in-law, Diana Carol Whitson-Thompson and Chris Thompson, his daughter and son-in-law, Jennifer and Bud Davis, Sr., and ten grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, he will be sadly mourned, but fondly remembered, by his brothers, Don Whitson and Jim Whitson, his sisters and brothers-in-law, Jean and Fred Lyle, and Pat and Bill Kennedy, several nieces and nephews, and a host of dear friends and family members; and

WHEREAS, greatly respected and deeply admired by his many friends and colleagues, Mr. Whitson was a kind and affable gentleman who loved Tennessee and took great pride in

making his community and State a better place for all; his unmatched record in public service, education, and business stands as a monument to a life well lived; and

WHEREAS, Zane C. Whitson, Jr. leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember 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 SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of our former colleague, Representative Zane C. Whitson, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character as a legislator, public servant, and human being, and commend his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Representative Whitson.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.