

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 551

By Faison

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Phares Thomas "Tom" Hensley of Jackson.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Phares Thomas "Tom" Hensley; and

WHEREAS, a legendary fixture in the hallowed halls of the Tennessee State Capitol for more than sixty years, Tom Hensley was affably known to one and all as "The Golden Goose" and the acknowledged dean of the cadre of lobbyists who represent their clients before the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Phares Thomas "Tom" Hensley was born in Jackson on June 30, 1942, to Martha Thomas Hensley and Phares Pope Hensley and made his way to Nashville at the age of seventeen after leaving high school in 1959; and

WHEREAS in Nashville, he worked in the hospitality suite for state legislators at the Hermitage Hotel, where his incredible work ethic and personality quickly caught people's attention, including that of his future wife, Dianne, whom he met in the hotel elevator; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hensley spent more than sixty years as a lobbyist for the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of Tennessee, among other groups, and became well known for traveling the halls of the Capitol complex wearing his trademark three-piece suit, chomping on a cigar, and holding court at the round table at the bar in Morton's on Church Street; and

WHEREAS, he lent his time and energies to countless organizations in his community, including the Jackson Jaycees; Exchange Club; Woodlawn Shores Volunteer Fire Department, which he served as president; and the Jackson Madison County Community Economic Development Commission, which he served as president and commissioner; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Mr. Hensley began volunteering with the Miss Tennessee Pageant and served in various executive roles beginning in the 1960s; he went on to become a board

member for the Miss America Pageant and executive director, president, and CEO of the Miss Tennessee Scholarship Pageant; and

WHEREAS, due to his many years of service to the Miss America Organization, he was the first person inducted into the Miss America Academy of Honor in 1996; and

WHEREAS, beginning with his initial appointment in 1987 by Governor Ned McWherter and continuing through subsequent appointments by Lt. Governor John S. Wilder and Governor Don Sundquist, Mr. Hensley served on the Tennessee Wildlife Regulatory Commission for a total of eighteen productive years, including one year of meritorious leadership as chairman; during this time, he was actively involved in the General Assembly's passage of the Wetlands Acquisition Act and was instrumental in the Tennessee Wildlife Regulatory Authority's purchase of 200,000 acres to protect our wetlands pursuant to the Act; and

WHEREAS, a vital part of the hunting and wildlife management communities, Mr. Hensley served as a member of Ducks Unlimited for over thirty years, including five years as president of the Jackson Chapter, and rendered sterling service as a member of the board of the Tennessee Conservation League and the board of Tennessee Waterfowl Association, which he also served as president; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his efforts, he received the Tennessee Wildlife Federation's Conservation Achievement Award in 1992 and the Z. Cartter Patten Award for lifetime conservation achievement in 2015; and

WHEREAS, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Mr. Hensley is survived by his beloved wife, Dianne Hensley; his children Michelle (Jimmy) Evans, Lesa Lyday, and Susan (Joe) Nanney; and his grandchildren, Jake Evans, Ben Evans, Phares Gregg, Isabelle Barber, and Hensley Lyday; and

WHEREAS, Tom Hensley 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 we pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional gentleman and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Phares Thomas "Tom" Hensley, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and 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 Mr. Hensley.

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.