

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 696

By Sparks

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate WGNS on its seventy-fifth anniversary.

WHEREAS, locally owned and operated radio stations have been important community cultural institutions since the early days of the radio industry, as the new medium brought local, national, and world events to listeners in a timely fashion and opened doors to music, sports, weather, and other features; and

WHEREAS, WGNS radio in Rutherford County is one such vital station, which, for seventy-five years, has provided its listeners with outstanding service; and

WHEREAS, WGNS signed on the air at 10:00 p.m. on December 31, 1946; initially, the offices, studio, and transmitter were housed in a small, two-story block building located near the station's self-supporting 328-foot-tall radio tower; and

WHEREAS, Cecil Elrod, the radio station's first owner, chose to relocate the WGNS studio to the mezzanine of his family's business, Elrod's French Shoppe, which was an elegant women's apparel store on the east side of Murfreesboro's historic town square; and

WHEREAS, in the 1960s, the radio station moved three blocks off the square to its present location at 306 South Church Street in Murfreesboro; and

WHEREAS, while WGNS has broadcast on AM 1450 for a remarkable seventy-five years, in 1995 the station expanded its offerings to include its "Good Neighbor" programs on TV channel 11; the Class A television station broadcasts the same programming as is heard on radio, but it also televises its shows, which often feature the station's hosts interviewing various community leaders; and

WHEREAS, in March 2007, WGNS put its hometown-focused broadcasts on FM 100.5 and FM 101.9; in combination with its internet site, there are currently five ways of connecting

with Murfreesboro through its "Good Neighbor Station," which is exactly what the letters GNS in its call sign stand for; and

WHEREAS, local sports broadcasts have always been highly popular on WGNS; the station has included live play-by-play of local high school games since 1947 and continues to be the Heart of Tennessee's Blue Raider affiliate; WGNS has also been the area's Atlanta Braves station for forty years; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Gospelairens filled the airwaves with music every Sunday night, and WGNS still devotes most of Sunday's broadcast schedule to religious programming; and

WHEREAS, many prominent figures have been associated with this storied radio station during its seventy-five-year history, including former State Representative John Hood; Hall of Fame broadcaster Carl P. Mayfield, who had a nationwide satellite radio show; "Mr. Boots, Boots, Boots" Jerry Brown; well-known local musician Carl Tipton; nationally known announcer John Young; sportscaster Monte Hale, in whose memory a local street and the basketball arena at Middle Tennessee State University were named; and numerous other civic leaders; and

WHEREAS, in December 2021, FM 100.5 relocated to Smyrna in order to expand coverage to this growing area of Rutherford County; and

WHEREAS, for seventy-five years, WGNS has provided countless hours of reliable information, quality entertainment, and caring public service to thousands of listeners and has earned a hallowed place in the hearts of its fans; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and congratulate the owners and staff of WGNS as they celebrate seventy-five years of broadcasting and service to their community and extend to them our best wishes for much continued 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.