

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 697

By McDonald

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Betty Hawkins of Gallatin upon receiving the Governor's Volunteer Stars Award for Sumner County.

WHEREAS, from time to time, certain citizens of this fine State rise above their peers to stand proud in their volunteerism and dedication to their fellow citizens, exceeding the norm to serve as beacons of light and goodness in this world; and

WHEREAS, Betty Hawkins of Gallatin is one such individual who was recently recognized as a recipient of the Governor's Volunteer Stars Award, which honors outstanding adult and youth volunteers throughout Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, every year 1.3 million Tennessee volunteers give over 148 million hours of service, contributing \$3.2 billion to Tennessee's economy; and

WHEREAS, due to her dedication to the people of Tennessee and the difference she has made in so many lives, Mrs. Hawkins has been invited to accept her award at the 4th Annual Governor's Volunteer Star Awards ceremony on February 27, 2012, at the Franklin Marriott Cool Springs; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Hawkins is being recognized for her efforts in establishing the Children's Jail Ministry, which provides a safe, pleasant atmosphere for children while the adults accompanying them visit with family members incarcerated in the Sumner County Jail; and

WHEREAS, she came up with the idea for the ministry to children when she and her husband, James W. Hawkins, were visiting the jail in the summer of 2007; and

WHEREAS, as active and devout members of the First United Methodist Church in Gallatin, Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins enlisted the help of the church in getting tables, chairs, games, toys, and other supplies and, when Betty shared her idea with church members, she enlisted

volunteers to help spend time with the children, playing and giving them attention while their family members visit the incarcerated person via a screen monitor; and

WHEREAS, since its founding in 2007, the jail ministry has provided over 13,000 such encounters and, according to the jail staff, the Children's Jail Ministry has improved the operation of the jail visitation process and has contributed to the maintenance of family ties for the inmates, the only program of its kind in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, after raising four boys, Betty Hawkins returned to school and earned her Master of Arts degree in teaching from Middle Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, she taught English and writing during the final year of existence of Union High School in Gallatin, prior to integration, and was then selected as a charter faculty member at Volunteer State Community College; and

WHEREAS, when she retired after twenty years of teaching at Vol State, the campus community and others from Sumner County recognized her with a special surprise ceremony and tree-planting in her honor; and

WHEREAS, active in her community, Mrs. Hawkins has been involved with Gallatin CARES and the Good Neighbor Mission, which both provide critically-needed assistance for persons and families in distress; and

WHEREAS, she has served as a volunteer with the United Way of Sumner County, Gallatin Band Boosters, Cub Scouts of America, and many other volunteer initiatives sponsored by her church and other nonprofit organizations in the community; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Hawkins's remarkable success as a civic leader is directly attributable to her reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and her uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, an extremely giving person who often reaches out with compassion to people whom life has treated unkindly, Betty Hawkins epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Hawkins is wholly deserving of this award, and it is entirely fitting that she gain the formal recognition of this Body honoring her for this achievement; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Betty Hawkins upon receiving the Governor's Volunteer Stars Award for Sumner County, thank her for her tireless dedication and service to the good people of Tennessee, and extend to her our best wishes for every continued success in all her future endeavors.

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