

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 843

By Goins

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Judge Melinda Anne Norton on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those jurists who have worked with purpose and commitment to protect this state's abused and neglected children; and

WHEREAS, one such exemplary jurist is the Honorable Melinda Anne "Mindy" Norton, Hamblen County Juvenile Court Judge; Judge Norton announced her retirement effective September 1, 2014, as she will not seek re-election to the bench; and

WHEREAS, a native of Hamblen County, Judge Norton is the daughter of Marvin Norton and Joanne Corbin Norton, who owned mom-and-pop grocery stores and worked twelve-hour days to support their family; in light of her experiences in juvenile court, she feels fortunate to have grown up in a home where she was loved by her parents, grandparents, and Aunt Lena and where she always felt safe; and

WHEREAS, while attending elementary school, Judge Norton discovered that she was adept at writing and giving speeches; she won the county-wide 4-H public speaking contest when she was an 8th grader and placed third in the district contest; and

WHEREAS, a defining moment in young Mindy's life came when her mother permitted her to attend criminal court with her grandfather, who had been called to jury duty; although she was only ten years old, Judge Norton knew she had discovered her future career as an attorney the moment she heard the bailiff call the courtroom to order; and

WHEREAS, Judge Norton graduated from Morristown-Hamblen High School East with high honors and gave the valedictory speech at her graduation; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from the University of Tennessee in 1978 with high honors, Judge Norton attended the University of Tennessee College of Law, graduated in 1980, and studied for a summer semester at Oxford, England; and

WHEREAS, upon being admitted to the Tennessee bar, she returned home to Morristown and began her law career; her skills as an attorney were honed that first year of private practice when she represented court-appointed defendants in thirteen jury trials at the tender age of twenty-three; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, Mindy Norton was tapped to serve as Juvenile Court Magistrate by the court; she served with distinction as magistrate for eight years, and in 1990, she was elected to her first eight-year term as Juvenile Court Judge; and

WHEREAS, when she leaves the bench on August 31, 2014, she will have served the citizens of Hamblen County for thirty-three years as either Juvenile Court Magistrate or Juvenile Court Judge; and

WHEREAS, looking back on her long and distinguished career on the juvenile court bench, Judge Norton counts as her proudest moments the occasions when she helped to ensure that an abused or neglected child received a permanent, safe, stable, and loving home; and

WHEREAS, a leader among her peers, Judge Norton graduated from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Fall College and has served as the secretary-treasurer and on the board of directors of the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; and

WHEREAS, she has shared her wisdom and legal expertise as an adjunct professor in juvenile law at Walters State Community College; and

WHEREAS, Judge Norton gives back to her community as one of the first women members of the Morristown Kiwanis Club, which she served as its first woman president; in 2008, she founded the Kidz Succeed, Inc. program, a non-profit organization whose mission

statement is to “encourage and reward Hamblen County kids on probation to succeed” by becoming productive, law-abiding citizens in the community; and

WHEREAS, her many professional and personal accomplishments aside, Judge Norton is most grateful for the love, companionship, and support she shares her sons, Grant and Matt, who are the outstanding end products of her most important and most difficult job as their mother; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Judge Mindy Norton has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of members of the bench and the bar alike and children’s advocates across the state; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor, commend and congratulate Judge Melinda Anne Norton on her exemplary thirty-three year tenure as Juvenile Court Magistrate or Juvenile Court Judge in Hamblen County, applaud her commitment to protecting this state’s most vulnerable citizens, and extend our best wishes for her every future success and happiness.

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