

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 925

By Holsclaw

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Josh Wandell of Elizabethton.

WHEREAS, we were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Dr. Josh Wandell; and

WHEREAS, born on August 20, 1978, to Steve Wandell and Betsy Geagley, Dr. Wandell was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Elizabethton High School, Josh Wandell was an exemplary student and a talented athlete in football, basketball, baseball, and track; he was named to the TSSAA All-State team as a wide receiver during his senior year and was inducted into the Elizabethton High School Sports Hall of Fame in 2012; and

WHEREAS, he attended the University of Tennessee and East Tennessee State University before obtaining his bachelor's degree in education from Tusculum College in 2001; he later continued his education at Lincoln Memorial University, where he earned a master's degree and then a doctoral degree in education; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wandell began his estimable career in education at Happy Valley Middle School, serving as a teacher and coaching football, baseball, and softball. He later left his teaching position to become principal at his childhood school, East Side Elementary, where he served with acumen and alacrity until his retirement in 2016; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Dr. Wandell was nominated as Principal of the Year for the State of Tennessee, and in 2017, East Side Elementary School dedicated a facility, the Wandell Learning Center, in his honor; and

WHEREAS, active in his community, Dr. Wandell was a member of the Tennessee Principal Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the All Pro Dad Organization; and

WHEREAS, after his ALS diagnosis in 2013, Dr. Wandell became a tireless advocate for ALS awareness, speaking at local churches, schools, and community events and participating in numerous races, including the Virginia Beach Shamrock Half Marathon, in which race he and his teammate, Jeff Vance, set a new Guinness World Record for the fastest half marathon by a wheelchair racer; and

WHEREAS, the annual Race for Wandell, a foot race established to help with the expenses for Dr. Wandell's treatment, has grown into the largest foot race in Carter County and raises both money and awareness for ALS causes; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wandell was an active and devout member of First Christian Church in Johnson City, which he served faithfully for many years as a member of the Prime Time Sunday School Class; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Josh Wandell was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, he is survived by his loving wife of seven years, Tabitha Wandell; his children, Jayla Wandell, Taylor Long, and J.T. Long; a brother, Neal Wandell; a sister, Elizabeth Wandell; his maternal grandmother, JoAnne Blair; and a host of extended family and close friends; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his paternal grandparents, Fred and Betty Wandell, and his maternal grandfather, John Geagley; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wandell 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 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 ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. Josh Wandell, 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 Dr. Wandell.

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.