

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 973

By Powell

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Jim Ridley, editor of the *Nashville Scene*.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Jim Ridley, the editor and the heart and soul of the *Nashville Scene*, nationally renowned film critic, and ardent supporter of the local film community; and

WHEREAS, a twenty-seven-year veteran of journalism, Mr. Ridley rose through the ranks at the *Scene*, starting as a freelance writer in 1989 and assuming the mantle of leadership as editor in 2009; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ridley began contributing book reviews to *The Tennessean* at the early age of thirteen and then honed his craft while attending Vanderbilt University by writing film and music reviews for *The Hustler* and *Versus*; he also contributed to *Nashville Intelligence Report* and *Fireplace Whiskey Journal* while a student at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU); and

WHEREAS, he truly found his voice as a writer when he began writing film reviews for the *Scene*; over the years, he earned a national reputation as a film critic, and he certainly could have spread his wings as a writer and critic beyond Nashville, but Jim Ridley was dedicated to the city and the *Scene*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ridley won first-place awards for arts criticism from the Association for Alternative Newsmedia in 2006 and 2010; and

WHEREAS, as an editor, Jim Ridley was a supportive and inspirational mentor for numerous writers; he made every single journalist working under him better and was legendary for improving their stories with his tweaks, most notably his description of a certain pop star as “no chimp-cuddling moonbeam”; and

WHEREAS, he was the best writer the *Scene* has ever known, and for his colleagues his presence was “like having Shakespeare one cubicle over”; and

WHEREAS, his passion and command of the English language are evident in all his work, while his lyricism catapults his film reviews far beyond the work of his peers; his great talent as a writer inspired his staff to write better copy for him, and *Scene* writers won forty Association of Alternative Newsmedia awards under his tutelage; and

WHEREAS, most of all, Jim Ridley will be remembered and appreciated for his unflinching kindness, generosity of time and resources, and strong support of the causes in which he believed; and

WHEREAS, his modesty, his generous praise and encouragement of others, his humanity and genuine interest in people, and his sparkling personality all combined to create “the only newspaper editor in history without a single enemy,” as one colleague described him; and

WHEREAS, he was a stalwart supporter of the local film community and, especially, the Belcourt Theatre, the popular independent theater that screens films beyond Hollywood’s standard comic-book fare; his greatest contribution to the Belcourt was his writing, which helped people understand and relate to the beauty of alternative films and classic movies; and

WHEREAS, an ambassador for Nashville, the city he dearly loved, Jim Ridley introduced locals and visitors alike to the real Music City and the things that made the city special, and he inspired many artists to make Nashville both their home and a more interesting place to live; and

WHEREAS, James Allison Ridley V was born into a prominent Murfreesboro family; his passion for the arts simply continued a family tradition: his father, James Allison Ridley IV, and late mother, Polly Dillon Ridley, were founders of the Murfreesboro Little Theatre and his brother, Read Ridley, is a filmmaker and the director of Columbia State Community College’s Film Crew Technology program; and

WHEREAS, Jim Ridley received a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications from MTSU in 1989 and was enshrined on MTSU’s College of Mass Communication’s Wall of Fame last year in recognition of his many accomplishments in journalism; and

WHEREAS, this remarkable gentleman is survived by his wife, Alicia Adkerson, and their children, Kat and Jamie; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly remember the bountiful life of this exceptional journalist, writer, and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we celebrate the life and honor the memory of Jim Ridley, reflecting fondly upon his exemplary career in journalism, his great talent as a writer and editor, his devotion to film, and his generosity, compassion, and kindness as a husband, father, friend, and colleague.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and many friends of Jim Ridley.

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