

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1007

By Miller L

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Michael Heisley,
majority owner of the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies,
for his outstanding community contributions.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those individuals who, through their extraordinary efforts, have touched the lives of thousands and have distinguished themselves as remarkable leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Michael Heisley, majority owner of the NBA's Memphis Grizzlies and a highly respected member of the Memphis community; and

WHEREAS, from the moment Michael Heisley brought the National Basketball Association (NBA) to Tennessee for the first time in the State's history in 2001, his mission was to help build a better Memphis while providing Tennesseans the opportunity of observing some of the finest athletes in the world; and

WHEREAS, in bringing the Grizzlies to Memphis ten years ago, Mr. Heisley immediately injected a sense of excitement and pride into the City of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, dedicating himself to giving people throughout the Mid-South a team they could be proud of, he recruited the best of the best in the basketball world to run the team; and

WHEREAS, Jerry West, a person so synonymous with the NBA that his silhouette is incorporated into the league's logo, was hand picked by Michael Heisley to serve as President of Basketball Operations for the Memphis Grizzlies; and

WHEREAS, under Mr. Heisley's and Mr. West's guidance, the Grizzlies quickly put together a string of three consecutive postseason appearances that put Memphis and the State of Tennessee in the national spotlight; and

WHEREAS, not satisfied with simply allowing his team to be in the middle of the pack, Michael Heisley has recently keyed a Grizzlies renaissance, bringing in such players as All-Star Zach Randolph, O. J. Mayo, and Marc Gasol that embody the tenacity, toughness, and relentlessness so essential to winning basketball games; and

WHEREAS, as the Grizzlies enter their tenth season in 2010–2011, Mr. Heisley is certain to continue to help make this franchise as much a piece of the fabric of Memphis as the Neely's barbeque he covets, the Blues, or Beale Street; and

WHEREAS, Michael Heisley once said that the reason he bought the Grizzlies was because the mascot reminded him of himself and, while this may very well be true, as much as he has proven to be a bear in the business world, his generosity and charitable work have made him more of a teddy bear in the community; and

WHEREAS, while Mr. Heisley strives to build a winner on the basketball court, he has certainly become a champion for charitable causes, having made a concentrated effort from the moment he brought the Grizzlies to Tennessee to establish the Grizzlies as a leader in community philanthropy; and

WHEREAS, Michael Heisley has taken the lead on numerous large community initiatives, including the spearheading of a \$5 million donation from the Memphis Grizzlies Charitable Foundation to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital to build the Memphis Grizzlies House, a temporary, on-campus residence for the families of St. Jude patients; and

WHEREAS, the Grizzlies Foundation, led by Mr. Heisley's Grizzlies ownership group, has given a total of \$7 million to Memphis Athletic Ministries, which operates six neighborhood centers and runs year-round youth sports leagues and after-school programs, and another \$1.5 million to the Stax Music Academy; and

WHEREAS, the Grizzlies Charitable Foundation has also helped found Grizzlies Academy, a "second chance" high school that opened in 2003 and has awarded diplomas to four graduating classes since 2006; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the Grizzlies Foundation has donated \$22 million to local non-profit organizations since December of 2001, raising the bar for charitable giving in professional sports; and

WHEREAS, this outstanding record of service led to the Foundation's receipt of the prestigious 2007 Steve Patterson Sports Philanthropy Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, by which they were recognized as the most philanthropic sports team in the nation; and

WHEREAS, one of Michael Heisley's greatest gifts to the City of Memphis is one of the crown jewels of the city, the FedExForum, which was completed on time and on budget in September of 2004; FedExForum has become a building that not only serves as an entertainment center for people throughout the Mid-South but also serves as an iconic source of pride throughout the city; and

WHEREAS, not only has the FedExForum created jobs and opportunities for the people of the Mid-South, it has also made Memphis one of the choice destinations for such music legends as the Rolling Stones, Elton John, George Strait, and Memphis's own Justin Timberlake, along with such family shows as Disney on Ice and Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Heisley was also a key figure in bringing one of the fastest rising sports this country has ever seen to Tennessee; thanks to his vision, FedExForum made the unprecedented move as a facility to lead the charge to legalize Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Michael Heisley understood the positive economic impact MMA would have on this state, and his foresight has led to MMA's top league, the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), holding two events in the state thus far; with the unquestioned success of the two UFC events in Nashville and Memphis, MMA and the UFC are sure to continue making significant contributions to our state again in the future; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Mr. Heisley has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of a grateful public; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and honor Michael Heisley, majority owner of the

NBA's Memphis Grizzlies, for his valuable contributions to this State, and extend to him our heartfelt wishes for every continued success in his 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.