

SENATE BILL 944

By Southerland

AN ACT to name the new welcome center on Interstate 26  
in Unicoi County in honor of the late  
Representative Zane Whitson.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should honor the memory of an  
accomplished public servant who served this state with the greatest probity and dedication; and

WHEREAS, no Tennessean is more than deserving of this body's recognition than our  
friend and former colleague, the late Zane C. Whitson, Jr., who was a member of the House of  
Representatives of the 91<sup>st</sup>-102<sup>nd</sup> Tennessee General Assemblies, serving from 1978 until 2002;  
and

WHEREAS, Zane Whitson was an exemplary and conscientious public servant and  
consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow  
citizens, especially his constituents in Unicoi and Greene counties, in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, an accomplished educator, coach, and businessman, Mr. Whitson enjoyed  
success in every endeavor he undertook, be it teaching students to strive for excellence in the  
classroom, turning young athletes into champions on the basketball court, or recruiting  
industries and businesses to beautiful Unicoi County; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from education in 1984, Mr. Whitson served as Director of  
Economic and Community Development for Unicoi County, working as the industrial recruiter for  
Unicoi County until 2006; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the House of Representatives, Zane Whitson was a  
prominent member of the Commerce Committee, the Transportation Committee, the Education  
Committee, and the Finance, Ways and Means Committee and served as an officer of the  
Expenditures and Revenue Subcommittee; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as a member of the Tennessee General Assembly, Zane Whitson served as Chairman of the Northeast Tennessee Caucus and was a key member of the Select Oversight Committee on Education, the Select Committee on Children and Youth, and the Select Oversight Committee on TennCare; and

WHEREAS, while serving on the Comprehensive Select Committee on Education in the early 1980s, Representative Whitson played an integral part in the Better Schools initiative of the Alexander administration, sponsoring the legislation that established alternative schools in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, highly regarded by his colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Representative Whitson worked tenaciously to aid the people of his district, ensuring that highway projects, such as the completion of Interstate 26, were on schedule to provide yet another tool to attract more jobs and benefits to the community; and

WHEREAS, greatly respected and deeply admired by his many friends and colleagues, Mr. Whitson was a kind and affable gentleman who loved Tennessee and took great pride in making his community and State a better place for all; his unmatched record in public service, education, and business stands as a monument to a life well lived; and

WHEREAS, because he played such an instrumental role in the completion of Interstate 26, it is most fitting that this General Assembly should name the new welcome center on Interstate 26 in his honor, on the behalf of a grateful public; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the new welcome center located at Exit 9 on Interstate 26 in Unicoi County is hereby designated the "Zane Whitson Welcome Center" as a lasting tribute to one of the most effective and most dedicated public servants in the long and illustrious history of Tennessee.

SECTION 2. The commissioner of tourist development is directed to erect or affix suitable signs designating the new welcome center located at Exit 9 on Interstate 26 in Unicoi County as the "Zane Whitson Welcome Center."

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.