

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 7

By Tracy

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Mr. James Ivan Potts of Shelbyville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of James Ivan Potts; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Potts 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 highly successful businessman in the automobile industry, James Potts was a distinguished civic leader, visionary businessman, and esteemed public servant; and

WHEREAS, born in Shelbyville on September 10, 1919, James Potts was the son of J. Ivan and Alice Hall Potts. He attended Shelbyville Central High School and graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1942 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Commerce; and

WHEREAS, recognized as a leader by his peers at the University of Kentucky, Mr. Potts served as the president of Phi Delta Theta social fraternity and was the captain of the Scabbard and Blade national military society; and

WHEREAS, he also served as a Regimental Adjutant of the Reserve Officers Training Corps and, upon his graduation, was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army Air Corps. He performed with valor as a B-29 pilot in the 25<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, 40<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (VH) in India, China, and Tinian in the Western Pacific during World War II; and

WHEREAS, a member of this nation's greatest generation, Mr. Potts completed thirty-five combat missions and eight "hump trips," earning a total of 525 combat hours; in September of 1945, he was selected as a pilot on General Curtis LeMay's personal crew, which completed a long-distance flight from Japan to Washington, D.C. which broke four Army Air Force records; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his exemplary military service, Mr. Potts was awarded numerous medals, among them two Distinguished Flying Crosses and four Air Medals; at the time of his death, he held a commission as Colonel (Retired) with the Tennessee Air National Guard; and

WHEREAS, continuing his service to his country following the war, Mr. Potts served as a Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State in the U.S. Embassy in Lima, Peru, from 1946 until 1947 and served as Chief of Staff to Ambassador Prentice Cooper; and

WHEREAS, in 1949, Mr. Potts was joined in holy matrimony with Katherine Bishop Dale of Nashville, and this joyous union would produce one son, James Ivan Potts III; and

WHEREAS, embarking on a career in business, James Potts joined his father at Stewart Potts Motors, a Ford-Mercury dealership, in 1950. He became the sole dealer in 1955; and

WHEREAS, serving as president of the business until its sale in 1980, Mr. Potts's tenure as the owner of Stewart Potts Motors was defined by distinction. The dealership was very successful and received numerous awards and special recognitions from the Ford Motor Company; and

WHEREAS, noted for his excellence in the auto industry, Mr. Potts served as a member of the Tennessee Motor Vehicle Commission under four governors, including serving a term as its chairman under Governor Frank G. Clement in 1963; and

WHEREAS, a dedicated civic leader, James Potts was a fifty-year member and past president of the Shelbyville Rotary Club and was designated by the club as a Paul Harris Fellow in 1979; he was also a Life Trustee of the Webb Preparatory School in Bell Buckle; and

WHEREAS, highly respected by his peers, Mr. Potts was a longtime member of the Tennessee Automotive Association, serving as president in 1962, and was the recipient of the Andrew Jackson Award for his contribution to the automotive industry in Tennessee in 1967; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, James Potts was awarded the National Benjamin Franklin Quality Dealership Award by the *Saturday Evening Post* for his citizenship, community service and contributions to the automobile industry in 1968; and

WHEREAS, an active supporter of the Boy Scouts of America, he held the Scouting Long Rifle and Silver Beaver Awards and was a member of the Executive Committee, Middle

Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He also organized the Two Rivers District of the Boy Scouts of America, serving as the district's first chairman; and

WHEREAS, a talented writer, Mr. Potts authored two books: *The Potts Family of Bedford County, Tennessee* and *Remembrance of War*. He also published several articles on World War II that appeared in *Air Force Magazine*, the *Congressional Record*, the *Kentucky Alumnus*, *Friends Magazine* of the Air Force Museum, and Alan Grigg's "Flying Flack Alley"; and

WHEREAS, active in the Methodist Church, Mr. Potts was a member of First United Methodist Church, which he served faithfully for many years as chairman of the Official Board and as a member of the World Service Commission of the Tennessee Conference; and

WHEREAS, James Potts is survived by his beloved wife, Katherine Bishop Dale Potts, his devoted son and daughter-in-law, James Ivan Potts III and Susan Cooper Potts, and his treasured granddaughters, Elizabeth Ann and Sarah Katherine, as well as many other dear family members and loyal friends; and

WHEREAS, a gracious gentleman who esteemed community service and a life of purpose, Mr. Potts 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 this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this truly exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Mr. James Ivan Potts, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, his extraordinary contributions to the people of Tennessee, 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 Mr. James Ivan Potts.

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