

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 39

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Regina Ratcliff Smithson of Brentwood.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Regina Ratcliff Smithson; and

WHEREAS, Regina Smithson was a longtime city commissioner and former mayor of Brentwood who touched the lives of so many across the community, working tirelessly to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Smithson entered the world on November 27, 1943, one of twelve children born to Marion and Nellie Ratcliff; she grew up with a strong work ethic, helping her family pick cotton after school on their Rayville, Louisiana, farm; and

WHEREAS, Regina Smithson and her husband, John, built a successful business in Huntsville, Alabama; they moved to Brentwood in 1982 to own and operate Primerica Financial Services. While she was serving Brentwood as city commissioner, Mrs. Smithson was also studying and testing for her certifications in the financial world; and

WHEREAS, Regina Smithson joined the Brentwood City Commission in 1993; she served twice as mayor of Brentwood and once as the city's vice mayor, and over the years, she also served on the Brentwood Planning Commission, Sister Cities board, park board, environmental board, historic commission, and library board; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Smithson was also a gifted seamstress; she made the draperies for Ravenswood Mansion in Brentwood's Marcella Vivrette Smith Park, and, along with her daughter, Cynthia Sheldon, she sewed, designed, and sold exquisite handbags through Silver Plum, a company she went on to sell in the late 1990s; and

WHEREAS, known as smart, fierce, compassionate, and loyal, Mrs. Smithson was also a devoted mother who volunteered at Scales Elementary School, Brentwood Middle School, and Brentwood High School while raising her children, and she was later an active grandmother at these same schools when her grandchildren attended; and

WHEREAS, left to cherish her memory are her three children, Kimberly S. (Steve) Gawrys, J. Laird (Sydney) Smithson III, and Cynthia S. (Hunter) Shelden; her eleven grandchildren; her two great-grandchildren; her six siblings; a host of nieces and nephews; and her dear friends, "The Porch Ladies," Anne Dunn, Linda Lynch, Carole Crigger, Sherry Hammond, and Kathie Greaves; and

WHEREAS, she was preceded in death by her beloved husband of fifty-six years, John Laird Smithson, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Regina Smithson leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Smithson's influence on the character of and quality of life in Brentwood will be felt for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Regina Ratcliff Smithson, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Smithson.

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.