

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 522

By Swann

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Tennessee's former First Lady Leslee Kathryn Buhler "Honey" Alexander.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Tennessee's former First Lady Leslee Kathryn Buhler "Honey" Alexander; and

WHEREAS, Honey Alexander was a beloved humanitarian and public servant who gracefully served the citizens of this State as First Lady alongside her husband, Governor Lamar Alexander; and

WHEREAS, born on October 12, 1945, in Los Angeles, California, Mrs. Alexander was the second of Frank and Bette Jo Simpson Buhler's five children; when she was two years old, she relocated with her family to Victoria, Texas; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin, Texas, and Smith College, where she majored in American Studies, Honey Alexander joined the Washington, D.C., staff of Texas U.S. Senator John G. Tower in 1967; it was while in our nation's capital that she met her would-be husband, Lamar Alexander, who was at the time a staff member for Tennessee Senator Howard Baker, Jr. The two were married eighteen months later; and

WHEREAS, Honey Alexander was an effective advocate and partner in her husband's public service; she campaigned during Lamar Alexander's six races for governor and U.S. Senator, served eight years as First Lady of Tennessee, moved to Knoxville when he was University of Tennessee president and then to Washington, D.C., when he was United States Education Secretary and Senator. During 1994-1996, she traveled on her own to eighty different Iowa communities in his campaign for United States President; and

WHEREAS, as Tennessee's First Lady from 1979 to 1987, Mrs. Alexander led the statewide Healthy Children Initiative, providing resources through county health departments

where every child would have a medical home, prenatal care, and education on prevention of teenage pregnancies to families across the state; she was co-chair of the 1985-1986 Southern Regional Task Force on Infant Mortality, a member of the Governor's task forces on Day Care and on Youth Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and a member of the U.S. Health Secretary's Council on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention; and

WHEREAS, Honey Alexander co-founded Leadership Nashville in 1976; she served as a member of the boards of the Adventure Science Center, Vanderbilt's Kennedy Center, the Junior League of Nashville, the Dede Wallace Center, and the Hermitage and as board president for Nashville's Family and Children's Services, which later named its new headquarters the Honey Alexander Center in her honor; and

WHEREAS, at the national level, she served as vice chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and a board member of Family Service America and the National Archives Foundation; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being a noted public servant, Mrs. Alexander co-founded two successful businesses: Blackberry Farm and Corporate Child Care, Inc., the latter of which merged with Bright Horizons to become the world's largest provider of worksite child care; and

WHEREAS, a woman of faith, Honey Alexander was a longtime member of Christ (Episcopal) Church Cathedral in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, she was also wholly devoted to her family and always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, left to mourn her memory are her husband of fifty-three years, Lamar Alexander; children, Leslee Alexander, Kathryn Alexander, and Will Alexander; nine grandchildren; brothers, Frank Buhler, Jr., and Bruce Buhler; and sisters, Blanche Carter and Jessica Weiland; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her parents, Mrs. Alexander was preceded in death by her son, Drew Alexander; and

WHEREAS, Honey Alexander brought her passion for helping children and families to the Governor's Mansion in Nashville, the University of Tennessee, the Department of Education, and the United States Senate; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Alexander 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, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to 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 former First Lady Leslee Kathryn Buhler "Honey" Alexander, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character as a public servant and human being and commending 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 and loved ones of Mrs. Alexander.

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.