

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 707

By Haile

A RESOLUTION to recognize Deana Guenther on the occasion of her retirement from the General Assembly.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this body should honor those valuable legislative employees who performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of meritorious service to the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Eldena "Deana" Thomas Guenther is one such estimable person who served with distinction as an exemplary employee of the General Assembly, primarily the Senate, for forty-six years before taking her much-deserved retirement on November 15, 2019; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Guenther began her illustrious career with the General Assembly in September 1973 as an employee of Legislative Services (then called Legislative Council) in the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, her duties included traveling from Memphis to Knoxville for joint study committees on higher education and transportation, respectively; she also took dictation and typed proposed legislation to fund and construct the underground Legislative Plaza office building; and

WHEREAS, in January 1974, Deana Guenther relocated to the War Memorial Building, where she assisted four Senators: Senator Carl Koella of Maryville; Senator Marshall Nave of Elizabethton; Senator Ken Porter of Newport; and Senator Hayden Baker of Kingsport; and

WHEREAS, after Senator Porter left office to serve as a circuit court judge, she first added to her fold Senator Fred Myers, Jr., of Newport, who was appointed to serve the remainder of Senator Porter's term during a special session held at the Knoxville World's Fair, and later Senator Ben Hooper of Newport, a future federal judge, after he was elected to that seat; and

WHEREAS, when Senate staffing was increased to provide for two Senators per assistant instead of four in 1976, Ms. Guenther relocated once again, this time to the new Legislative Plaza to work for Senator Marshall Nave, Chairman of the Welfare Committee, and with Senator Carl Moore of Bristol, Chairman of the "new" Government Operations Committee; and

WHEREAS, after Lamar Alexander was elected Governor in November 1978, she was assigned by Lt. Governor John Wilder to work for the Governor-elect's Capitol Hill transition office; during this period of historic change that resulted in Governor Alexander being sworn in early, Deana worked alongside Keel Hunt and Granville Hinton, scheduling appointments for interviews for new cabinet members; and

WHEREAS, in early January 1979, she moved back to the War Memorial Building to assist Senator Carl Koella of Maryville, Chair of the Senate Rules Committee, and Senator Johnny Crowe of Bon Aqua; after one session, Ms. Guenther began working exclusively for Senator Koella, who would later be appointed Chairman of the Commerce, Labor and Agriculture Committee and serve in that capacity until his passing in 1998; and

WHEREAS, from 1998-2004, Deana Guenther was Executive Assistant to Senator Bill Clabough of Maryville, who after serving the remainder of Senator Koella's last term was elected to the seat in his own right and eventually became Republican Caucus Chairman; and

WHEREAS, from 2005-2008, Deana continued her tradition of assisting the good people of Blount and Sevier counties by working for Senator Raymond Finney of Maryville, Chairman of the Rules Committee and Calendar Committee; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Guenther was recognized for her prolific career in public service in 2006 when she was selected Senate Employee of the Year, an honor she still treasures; and

WHEREAS, after the August 2008 election, she worked for Senator Ken Yager of Roane County until the end of that year; and

WHEREAS, on the first day of legislative session in January 2009, Ms. Guenther went to work as Executive Assistant to Senator Mike Faulk of Kingsport, Chairman of the Calendar Committee, who represented Claiborne, Grainger, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, and Union

counties; at the end of his term, he chose not to run for re-election and later assumed a new title, Judge Faulk; and

WHEREAS, in early 2013, Ms. Guenther began her final legislative assignment as Executive Assistant to Senator Ferrell Haile of Sumner County, who served as Republican Caucus Treasurer and Deputy Speaker before being appointed Speaker Pro Tempore in January 2018; and

WHEREAS, Deana was proud to complete her forty-sixth year with the legislature as Leadership Executive Assistant to Speaker Pro Tempore Haile; and

WHEREAS, Eldena "Deana" Thomas Guenther is a native of rural Marshville, North Carolina, in the Township of New Salem and a graduate of Piedmont High School in Monroe, North Carolina, and King's Business College in Charlotte, North Carolina; she also attended Central Piedmont Community College, UNC-Charlotte, and UT-Nashville; and

WHEREAS, before moving to Tennessee, she served as the Office Manager for the National Alliance of Businessmen-Job Opportunities in the Business Sector, a federal program that helped the chronically unemployed and Vietnam-era veterans find and sustain employment; and

WHEREAS, a legislative veteran of forty-six years who worked for at least thirteen members during her illustrious tenure on Capitol Hill, Ms. Guenther exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Deana Guenther demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of her colleagues and the leadership and members of the General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Eldena "Deana" Thomas Guenther our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in her future endeavors, and we thank her for her dedicated and efficient service to the General Assembly.

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.