

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1537

By Watson

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate WDEF-TV
Chattanooga upon its seventieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are pleased to recognize those venerable television broadcast stations that provide outstanding service to their viewing audience; and

WHEREAS, WDEF-TV Chattanooga is one such vital television station, which is celebrating its seventieth anniversary of broadcasting excellence this year; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1950s, a group of rival business interests teamed up to win the first television broadcasting license for Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, WDEF-TV signed on the air for the first time on April 25, 1954; at that point, the station aired programming from four national networks, along with numerous local programs; and

WHEREAS, one of those shows was hosted by Luther Masingill, who was already a star on radio and continued working on both WDEF-TV and radio until his death in 2014 at the age of ninety-two; and

WHEREAS, Luther, as he was known on the air, held the mark for the longest broadcasting career at seventy-four years; on the air for both Pearl Harbor in 1941 and 9/11 in 2001, Mr. Masingill received a bevy of awards during his career, including two Marconi Awards and induction into the National Radio Broadcasters Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, WDEF-TV's early shows included daytime talk shows, teen dance programs, horror movie showcases, and even live wrestling in the same studio where the station broadcast the news; and

WHEREAS, after a number of volatile changes in the station's first years, WDEF-TV settled into a more stable period of ownership, characterized by Park Communications from 1963 to 1997, Medical General from 1997 to 2006, and Morris Multimedia from 2006 to present; and

WHEREAS, in the Morris era, WDEF-TV changed to high definition, digital broadcasting and added an online presence, including social media; and

WHEREAS, the station now broadcasts five hours of local news on weekdays, with the market's only live local newscast at 7:00 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, WDEF-TV launched a new news set, which incorporates local community elements and architectural cues from the Chattanooga Choo Choo, the Tennessee Aquarium, and other iconic sites; and

WHEREAS, in addition to CBS programming, WDEF-TV now broadcasts five digital channels and continues to serve the community as a dedicated marketing partner; and

WHEREAS, for seventy years, WDEF-TV has provided countless hours of reliable information, quality entertainment, and caring public service and has earned a hallowed place in the hearts of its viewers; 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 and congratulate the owners and staff of WDEF-TV as they celebrate seventy years of broadcasting and service to their community and extend to them our best wishes for much continued success.

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.

