

SENATE RESOLUTION 80

By Lamar

A RESOLUTION to honor Gwen McKenzie in celebration of Women's History Month in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the month of March was officially designated as Women's History Month in 1987; and

WHEREAS, every March, Women's History Month provides an opportunity to honor the achievements of those women who have paved the way wherein every person has an opportunity to pursue the American dream; and

WHEREAS, the Volunteer State is proud to be the home of a number of historic, pioneering women, including Gwen McKenzie, an esteemed public servant who currently serves as Vice Mayor of the City of Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, the first African-American woman to serve as Vice Mayor of Knoxville, Gwen McKenzie became the first African-American woman to serve on the Knoxville City Council when she won election to represent the 6<sup>th</sup> District in 2017 as the first woman to fill that seat; and

WHEREAS, Gwen McKenzie is the daughter of the late Woodrow Z. Wilson, Jr., who was the first executive director of the Knoxville Area Urban League, and the late Dora C. Wilson, a retired educator and community volunteer; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of South Carolina State College, Vice Mayor McKenzie currently serves as the executive director of Legacy Housing Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides programs to assist seniors, persons with disabilities, and families living in affordable housing communities; and

WHEREAS, she previously worked for CVS Health for nineteen years, where she held several leadership roles with the organization, and with Covenant Health at Ft. Sander's Loudon, Peninsula Hospital, and Peninsula Lighthouse; and

WHEREAS, she currently renders sterling service as a member of the boards of Tennova Healthcare, Knoxville Area Urban League, CAC, and Zoo Knoxville and is an advisory member for Emerald Youth Imagine a City; and

WHEREAS, an active part of her community, Vice Mayor McKenzie has lent her time and talents as a volunteer with a number of civic and charitable organizations, including the Free Medical Clinic, CONNECT Ministries, Knoxville Area Urban League's National Achievers Society, Shoes for School, The Love Kitchen, Wesley House, Habitat for Humanity, and Second Harvest Food Bank; and

WHEREAS, she is a member of the Knoxville Chapter NAACP, Leadership Knoxville Class of 2020, and the Town Hall East Community Association, and she exhibits her faith as a member of Greater Warner AME Zion Church; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, she has received the YWCA Tribute to Women Social Justice Award, the Omega Psi Phi Citizen of the Year Award, the Prince Hall Masons Distinguished Service Award, the Chi Eta Phi Nursing Sorority Distinguished Service Award, AHERN, Inc., Distinguished African American Award, the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Woman to Woman African American Award for Government and Politics, the Home Federal Bank Hometown Hero Award, the UNNIK Academy Community Recognition Award, and the CVS National Paragon Award; and

WHEREAS, her many professional accomplishments aside, Vice Mayor McKenzie is most thankful for the love and support of her devoted husband and their loving family of six children and one dog; and

WHEREAS, in saluting Mrs. McKenzie during Women's History Month, let us remember that when women succeed, America succeeds, as does Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor Gwen McKenzie on her many contributions to the State of Tennessee as we celebrate Women's History Month and the generations of trailblazing women who have built our State and their vital contributions to our country's history.

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