



2011 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 127

March 8, 2012 - Introduced by Representatives BERCEAU, TURNER, KESSLER, SINICKI, POCAN and C. TAYLOR, cosponsored by Senators DARLING, HOLPERIN, TAYLOR and RISSER. Referred to Committee on Rules.

1 **Relating to:** the life and public service of Harry F. Franke.

2 Whereas, Harry Franke, a true son of Milwaukee who spent his entire public
3 career finding allies for Milwaukee and Wisconsin throughout the world, passed
4 away in his beloved city on February 4, 2012; and

5 Whereas, Harry Franke was born October 13, 1922; grew up on the east side
6 of Milwaukee; earned a four-year scholarship to Milwaukee University School,
7 where he played football, served on the student council, and acted in school plays;
8 filled the family home with energy and his abundant sense of humor; and was known
9 for the jokes and tricks he played but also for his love of music; and

10 Whereas, Harry and his adored wife Mary were married for 64 years, and
11 together raised four children, Jay, John, Mary Ann, and Mark; and

12 Whereas, Harry attended the University of Wisconsin, left college to serve in
13 the Army during World War II, returned to finish his undergraduate education at
14 Marquette University, and received his law degree at UW-Madison in 1947; and

1 Whereas, an interest in politics as a means to be a positive influence for change
2 started with Harry's membership in the North Shore Republican Club in Milwaukee,
3 and continued with his election to the state assembly in 1950, followed in 1952 by a
4 term in the state senate, where he was at the time the youngest person ever elected
5 to that office and where he supported the growth of the potato and vegetable industry,
6 brought branch banking to communities across the state, and fought to implement
7 the Children's Code; and

8 Whereas, although a loyal Republican, in an episode that his son John
9 described as a "moment of courage," Harry famously stood up to Joe McCarthy, as
10 treasurer of the Joe must Go Club that tried to recall the senator in 1954; and

11 Whereas, after his service in the legislature, Harry began a career as a
12 distinguished lobbyist and prominent trial lawyer, joined the law firm that would
13 become Cook and Franke, hired, trained, and mentored numerous young attorneys,
14 and was named Milwaukee and Wisconsin Lawyer of the Year by the Bar Association;
15 and

16 Whereas, Harry's life-long enthusiasm to help others be and do better led to his
17 50-year membership in the Rotary Club of Milwaukee, where he served as president
18 and district governor, was named Rotary Man of the Year, and was active in the
19 Flickering Candle Society, a social group of past Milwaukee Rotary Club presidents,
20 and where he most loved to meet the people who did the work and benefited from the
21 projects he supported; and

22 Whereas, Harry's deep and abiding connection to his community led him, in
23 1991, to start the Harry and Mary Franke Idea Fund, which provided seed money
24 to bring good community-building ideas to fruition and has distributed 414 grants
25 to 150 nonprofit organizations over the past two decades; and

1 Whereas, recognizing that the best investment one can make is to invest in
2 people and allow them to pursue their passions, Harry instituted the Franke
3 Scholars Program, which helps students from the Milwaukee Public Schools attend
4 Wisconsin colleges, with partial grants, but not full rides, always accompanied by the
5 question, “How do you plan to give back to your community after you graduate?”; and

6 Whereas, countless people and organizations in Milwaukee and Wisconsin
7 benefited tremendously from Harry’s generous spirit, philanthropic nature, and
8 sense of duty and honor, as he served on the Greater Milwaukee Foundation Board
9 for ten years, spent twenty years in the Army Reserve, was curator emeritus of the
10 Wisconsin Historical Society, and supported libraries, the arts, environmental and
11 social causes, healthcare, WUWM, Habitat for Humanity, and the Medical College
12 of Wisconsin; and

13 Whereas, Harry had a life-long love of learning and the power of words,
14 probably best exemplified by the impromptu limericks for which he was so
15 well-known—spontaneous, short, fun, with surprise endings; and

16 Whereas, Harry Franke’s long life was a constant ode to civic duty and love of
17 family, and he was a devoted husband and father, and with happiness and infectious
18 enthusiasm he encouraged everyone he met to find and follow his or her own path;
19 now, therefore, be it

20 ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the members of the
21 Wisconsin legislature commend Harry Franke for his well-lived life and decades of
22 public service to the community of Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin, for his
23 dedication to helping others better themselves, and for his grace, spirit, and
24 unending humor; express their deep sorrow at his death; and extend their sincere
25 condolences to his family and friends; and, be it further

