

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 817

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Joe D. Duncan on the celebration of his 100th birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Joe D. Duncan celebrates his 100th birthday on February 11, 2024, a milestone that will be commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, Joe Duncan was born on February 11, 1924, to parents Cassie Lee and F.B. Duncan; he was raised, along with his nine siblings, in Scott County on a small farm near Huntsville; his father was a farmer and carpenter, and his mother was a school teacher; and

WHEREAS, by the age of six, Joe Duncan became a working member of the Duncan family, joining his father and brothers on the farm, performing chores incidental to the life of a farmer's son; and

WHEREAS, Joe Duncan's parents ensured that his formative years were filled with lessons in hard work, responsibility, courtesy, and the importance of education, which served well in molding young Joe into an admirable individual; and

WHEREAS, in 1941, Mr. Duncan graduated from Huntsville High School, where he was the top scorer on the basketball team during his senior year; following graduation, he entered the University of Tennessee, working his way through his first year of school; and

WHEREAS, a true American patriot, Joe Duncan volunteered for military service on March 18, 1943, joining the United States Army Air Corps as a navigator at the apex of World War II; after the war ended, Mr. Duncan was honorably discharged from the military on December 7, 1945, and returned to the University of Tennessee, where he earned his Artium Baccalaureatus (AB) and Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degrees; and

WHEREAS, in June 1946, Joe D. Duncan was joined in marriage with Louetta Phillips, and the couple's blessed union produced one son, Philip (Leslie), and two grandchildren, Meredyth and Tyler; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Duncan received his license to practice law, was admitted to the Bar of the State of Tennessee on March 16, 1949, and partnered with his brother, John, to open the private practice law firm Duncan and Duncan; and

WHEREAS, in October 1950, Joe Duncan was selected as a Special Agent by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); he participated in the investigation of hundreds of cases relating to internal security and criminal law, until his resignation from the FBI in March 1953; upon resigning, he was given a letter of commendation by Director J. Edgar Hoover, laudatory of his service to the bureau; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Duncan returned to Knoxville in 1953 to resume his law practice, once again partnering with his brother, John, and fellow attorney, B.R. McGee in the law firm Duncan, Duncan, and McGee; he later partnered with Richard R. Ford in the successor law firm, Duncan and Ford; during his legal career, Mr. Duncan engaged in the general practice of law, handling a variety of both civil and criminal cases at the trial and appellate levels, and practiced in all the courts, both State and Federal, throughout East Tennessee, as well as other parts of the State and adjoining states; and

WHEREAS, Joe Duncan supported his brother, John, in his successful bid for mayor of Knoxville by supervising his 1959 and 1963 campaigns and led John's successful campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1964 election; and

WHEREAS, Joe Duncan served the American Legion as its Second District Commander and its East Tennessee Vice Commander and was chosen in 1962 by the 54,000 Legionnaires in Tennessee to be the State Commander; during his year as the Legion's leader, he traveled extensively throughout Tennessee, delivering over 300 speeches to veterans' organizations, student and youth groups, civic clubs, and community groups, emphasizing the importance of community service and the preservation of our free institutions; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Joe D. Duncan won the election for Knox County Criminal Court Judge to succeed Judge J. Fred Bibb and was re-elected to that judgeship again in 1972; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, Tennessee Governor Winfield Dunn appointed Mr. Duncan to the State Court of Criminal Appeals, where he rose to the position of presiding judge and served until his retirement in 1990; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Duncan is a highly respected member of the Knox County community; he and his wife, Lou, are the longest-tenured residents of Suburban Hills, having lived in that west Knox County community for sixty-two years; and

WHEREAS, Joe Duncan is a valued member of the Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, where he has worshipped and served for decades; and

WHEREAS, an active member of his community, Mr. Duncan has participated in numerous professional, civic, and fraternal organizations, including the Knoxville Bar Association, Tennessee Bar Association, American Bar Association, Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association, University of Tennessee Alumni Association, Society of Former Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Westside Optimist Club, Knoxville Jaycees, Forty and Eight, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Lodge No. 160, and the Cherokee Lodge No. 728, Free and Accepted Masons; and

WHEREAS, since he left the legal profession, Joe Duncan has filled his years of retirement with activity; he founded and served as president of the Duncan Educational Fund, Inc., and the Duncan Family Cemetery, Inc.; he was editor of the Duncan Family Newsletter and has advised and supported the political careers of his nephew, former U.S. Representative John J. Duncan, Jr.; his niece, State Senator Becky Duncan Massey; and his son, former Falls Church City Councilor Philip Duncan; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; 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 hereby honor and congratulate Joe D. Duncan on the celebration of his 100th birthday and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

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.