

1 HR367
2 169567-1
3 By Representative Nordgren
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 04-JUN-15

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8 DESIGNATING THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2015 SHROUD AWARD.
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10 WHEREAS, as way of background for new members, the
11 Shroud Award was the 1979 creation of a former member of this
12 body who, as a mortician, believed the deadest bill of the
13 session was worthy of a high profile public burial. This is
14 the 37th edition of this unique sine die tradition in which
15 that bill's sponsor receives the Shroud, the gray garment on
16 display. The award is like a celebrity roast, filled with
17 satire and sarcasm. We have a take no prisoners approach.
18 Everyone should be okay with that, since that also appears to
19 be our new CRIMINAL JUSTICE philosophy. Previous recipients
20 who still have the courage to show up for legislative work
21 include Representatives A. Holmes, Carns, Knight, Black,
22 Rogers, Wood, Jackson, Morrow, McCutcheon, Todd, and Nordgren,
23 a lineup that makes last week's special order calendar look
24 good.

25 Lately, life on Goat Hill has not been fun. You guys
26 deserve a little levity. They say laughter is the BEST
27 medicine. In this case, it is the ONLY medicine the state can

1 still afford. For those who criticize this custom as a
2 colossal waste of time, BALONEY. Apparently, so is discussing
3 new sources of revenue. Whoever said nothing is certain but
4 death and taxes wasn't from these parts. Oh, by the way, you
5 might want to save the can the baloney came in. You never know
6 when you may want to kick it down the road.

7 It has been a difficult four months. The Governor
8 has valiantly crisscrossed the state stirring up large amounts
9 of apathy. Face it, when it comes to strong-arming votes, he
10 could learn a thing or two from Frank Underwood. Obviously, he
11 is not a fan of House of Cards. Perhaps the First Lady can
12 give him a few tips. But remember, he still knows how to make
13 this AUGUST Body an August Body.

14 Meanwhile, you guys have been kicked around so
15 much, we almost mistook you for the UAB football team. But
16 then we remembered the Blazers still have some supporters.
17 Citizens have bombarded you, offering opinions on education,
18 gambling, taxes, consolidation, and the state crustacean. To
19 be honest, you blew that last one. Everyone knows that the
20 Large Clawed Gulf Lobster was more appropriate. After all, the
21 state is in a real PINCH. And we won't even mention the
22 boiling water everyone is in.

23 Fortunately, winning the Shroud Award has its
24 positives. Allow us to give you the top ten, better make that
25 six, due to downsizing, reasons why receiving the award is a
26 good thing.

1 Number 6. It diverts your critics from the mischief
2 you're really up to.

3 Number 5. No need to worry about your constituents
4 sending you to Buck's Pocket, the home of defeated
5 politicians. It looks like that state park will shut down,
6 lacking not only a buck in its pocket, but even a penny in its
7 loafers.

8 Number 4. You can blame it on that darn legislative
9 E-mail hacker.

10 Number 3. Receiving the Shroud builds one's
11 character. It requires you to have a stiff upper lip. If that
12 proves too difficult, do what the lobbyists do, have it
13 tattooed on.

14 Number 2. The winner is entitled to a free dessert
15 at the Folsom Building Grill. Choices include a Lane Cake, a
16 Blame Cake, and a Shame Cake. As usual, state employees will
17 be asked to pick up the check.

18 Number 1. The award will bring popularity, prestige,
19 and influence. It could even be the precursor of passage of
20 your bill. For example, in 2007, Representative Thomas Jackson
21 won the Shroud for the Free the Hops bill and a couple of
22 years later his craft beer bill became law. In discussing the
23 benefits of the award, the Gentleman from Clarke stated,
24 "We've carried the shroud for a whole year. I got laughed at.
25 I got talked about. I got criticized. I was in the doggone
26 papers. Front page! Two weeks running! I haven't had that much
27 POPULARITY since I first ran for office." Then in 2011,

1 Representative Mac McCutcheon's home brew bill was named the
2 dearest bill of the session. A mere two years later, his
3 revived bill was miraculously enacted. Upon accepting the
4 Shroud, our friend cleverly commented, "I'll drink to that."
5 And now, just look at the Rules Chair. HE'S DRUNK WITH
6 POWER. Popularity? Prestige? Power? Winning the Shroud Award
7 could be the best thing to ever happen to you. You wish.

8 Before we get to the runners-up and the winner, we
9 want to mention the bill that captured everyone's attention,
10 House Bill 135, the general fund budget by the Chair of WMGF.
11 For the uninformed, the W and M stands for Wishing and
12 Miracles and the G and F stand for Grief and Frustration. Poor
13 Representative Clouse, and we do mean POOR. Someone better
14 check his office to make sure he came down from his window
15 ledge. He was so strapped for cash that he took on several
16 extra jobs; serving as a make up artist in order to put
17 lipstick on this pig; as a housekeeper, looking under the sofa
18 for a couple of extra nickels; and even as an astronomer,
19 searching the skies for manna from heaven. He suggested so
20 many hilariously hopeless financial plans that the Department
21 of Revenue is going to hit him with an AMUSEMENT TAX. Things
22 got so somber, people started calling his committee the Prozac
23 Nation. Heading Ways and Means is tough on a fella. We were
24 concerned for his physical and mental well-being. He keeps
25 muttering the same words, "the poor house, the poor house." At
26 first we thought he was commiserating with his fellow members
27 and the wrath they could soon be facing. But then we realized

1 he was actually reciting where the state is currently
2 situated: IN THE POOR HOUSE. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your
3 sacrifices; now hurry up and fix this.

4 We now proceed to those bills that were bad, just
5 not bad enough to win the grand prize. The two also rans are:

6 House Bill 434 by Representative Steve McMillian,
7 providing for the appointment of county superintendents of
8 education by the local county board of education. Long a
9 proponent of education reform, the sponsor stated he had been
10 promoting this bill for over 20 years. You would think that
11 after two decades he could get it right. The Rep from Lower
12 Alabama was quoted as saying, "As far as I know there's no
13 organized opposition to the bill." That was his first mistake.
14 In the know Educrats stated that electing superintendents was
15 an outdated governance model that kept some of the best
16 qualified candidates from serving. The experts argued the
17 people's voice would be heard through the school board.
18 Critics listened to those arguments about as much as kids
19 listen to the teacher on the last day of school. Opponents
20 quickly jumped on the fact the sponsor was denying their
21 people the right to vote. Most likely, some of those citizens
22 think losing their franchise means the local Burger King is
23 closing. But all that really didn't matter to the members who
24 trust the local folks, after all they were plenty smart when
25 it came to selecting their representative. Soon the bell rang
26 and the roll was called on the BIR. 49 Yeas, 33 Nays, and 9
27 abstentions. The measure was lost by an agonizing two tenths

1 of a vote. Ahh, if the sponsor only had one more short member
2 on his side. You know which one we are thinking of. But wait,
3 school had not quite let out. After the 22 bill special order
4 was completed, Rookie Representative Anthony Daniels moved to
5 reconsider. Talk about Daniels entering the lion's den. The
6 opposition immediately pounced to take a bite out of him. Time
7 and time again, the nay sayers demanded to know why Daniels
8 wanted to take the same test a second time. After extended
9 discussions that brought tears to our ears, the motion to
10 reconsider failed in a resounding No voice vote. Now the Bay
11 Minette veteran's bill was not merely dead, but it was double
12 dead and not coming back. In fact, it was cutting off your
13 head then shooting you a dozen times dead. And the final
14 epilogue to this extraordinary educational episode? The bill's
15 history contains one final sentence concerning the
16 reconsideration motion. "Daniels intended to vote Yea." In the
17 end, Representative McMillian learned a new lesson; its the
18 disorganized opposition you have to watch out for.

19 House Bill 341 by Representative Jack D. Williams
20 requiring the University of Alabama Systems to establish a
21 football program at the Birmingham Campus. We doubt the
22 sponsor will be showing up in houndstooth attire any time
23 soon. Skeptics kept saying that not even Amari Cooper or Sammy
24 Coates could get this pass. But the Birmingham Boaster made a
25 brilliant end run around, of all things, his own bill. Who
26 needs legislation when you have the truth and 28 million
27 dollars on your side? If you don't mind, could you share the

1 name of those donors with Representative Clouse? After
2 formulating an impressive game plan, the sponsor was loaded
3 for Bear, or at least for Bear Junior, and successfully
4 completed an impressive last minute drive. Only a goal line
5 stand by Linebacker Wingo could have stopped Wingback
6 Williams' forward momentum. Who needs a Saint Nick when you
7 have a Hail Mary? Thanks to the sponsor's high WATTAGE
8 efforts, the Blazers are back, at least for now. We don't want
9 to pull a Tom Brady and deflate your ball, but if things
10 change, don't fret Jack, besides your bill, you will always
11 have UAB basketball and whoever is playing the Crimson
12 Tide; and

13 WHEREAS, having dismissed the footnoted and also
14 rans, it is time to announce the winner of the Annual Shroud
15 Award. The deadest legislation of 2015 goes to a bill that:

16 Showed seventy is the new eighty.

17 Had a lot of moving parts, all going in reverse.

18 Had many wanting to avoid a trap.

19 Showed small town living can only go so far.

20 Lacked the ticket to success.

21 Reminded us that Argo is something more than an
22 Academy Award winning movie.

23 Think you got it? Sorry, but we can't afford to give
24 a monetary prize for a correct answer. The winner of the
25 Shroud Award is House Bill 196, allowing municipalities with
26 populations of less than 19,000 to enforce speed limits on
27 interstate highways. In explaining his bill, one of our Digger

1 O'Dells stated that on his drive to Montgomery he sometimes
2 sets the cruise on eighty and it really aggravates him when
3 others fly by. For some reason that comment set off the
4 sirens. What's the big deal? Its not like he broke the law or
5 anything. Besides, who knew a hearse could go that fast.
6 Critics expressed concerns that they could be stopped in a
7 Hicksville speed trap. They must have been worried that they
8 would be late to the next filibuster. The Representative from
9 Hartselle even asked if the real motive of the Clanton Casket
10 Connoisseur was to win the Shroud Award. That was almost as
11 cold as some of the sponsor's customers. When the BIR was
12 moved, it was time to put on your dark suit. The vote was 32
13 affirmatives and a whopping 50 negatives. The opposition was
14 composed of a diverse group; urban and rural, conservative and
15 moderate, Democrats and Republicans. For the lack of a better
16 term, you could call them Fifty Shades of Nay. Maybe some of
17 those young and naive opponents did not know the dirty secret
18 behind the original law which they so innocently continued.
19 Back in 1996, after being ticketed, the prohibition on small
20 town enforcement on the interstates was rapidly driven into
21 the code by a certain powerful State Senator who supposedly
22 possessed a get even mentality and a hair-raising habit of
23 driving over ninety miles an hour in the LOW BARREN areas
24 between major cities. Legend has it that he traveled so fast
25 that he blew the fruit off the Chilton County trees. Perhaps
26 on second thought, a no vote wasn't such a peachy idea after
27 all. Sadly for the sponsor, efforts to delete the words from

1 Fyffe, and we aren't talking about Barney, once again eluded
2 the law. Representative Nordgren wisely asked us to exhume
3 this body to see if we could dig up a little dirt. Luckily for
4 the primary proponent, he was not in the House when the
5 original 1996 law was passed. Unluckily for him, he was in the
6 House in 2010 when the law was amended without impacting the
7 small town prohibition. Guess who voted in favor of retaining
8 the provision that he now finds so offensive? Gotcha. Talk
9 about a deathbed confession left unspoken. But the rest of you
10 better not laugh too hard, as that vote was 92 to 0. Obviously
11 a few others followed Representative Martin down his now
12 misbegotten path. Anyhow, we have to admit that we had an
13 ulterior motive in pulling for Mortician Martin to win.
14 Hopefully, he will update this fading threadbare funeral
15 garment. Lord knows, we could use a new, more edgy model;
16 perhaps one that looks good with flip flops or at least has an
17 iPhone pocket. But the clothing still needs to be dressy and
18 classy enough to wear in a ridiculously swank place. You know,
19 somewhere like the SENATE CHAMBER; now therefore,

20 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
21 THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That the winner of the 2015 Shroud
22 Award is House Bill 196 which would permit municipalities with
23 populations of less than 19,000 inhabitants to enforce speed
24 limits on interstate highways. First, following the advice of
25 the other members of the Coffin Caucus, the sponsor should
26 know that our itemized bill for providing these lovely
27 arrangements will be forthcoming. Full payment is due in

1 thirty days. Now, Representative Jimmy Martin, please cease
2 all undertakings and lead the procession forward to the burial
3 site to receive your final reward.