

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 178

By Cochran

A RESOLUTION to honor the legendary Celeste Thomas on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, few employees have navigated the General Assembly long enough to work under eight Governors and eight Speakers of the House, yet somehow Celeste Thomas has survived, and even excelled, as a legislative staffer for some forty-eight years; and

WHEREAS, Celeste first entered these hallowed halls in January 1973, when Ned McWherter was serving his first term as Speaker of the House and leisure suits were all the rage in fashion; and

WHEREAS, during these halcyon days, legislative assistants toiled away for four House members each, used rotary-dial telephones, took shorthand, typed on IBM Selectric machines, and arrived at 5 a.m. to feed the legislative chickens and milk the legislative cows; being a country girl from Madison, Celeste fit right in; and

WHEREAS, in the course of her illustrious career with the House of Representatives, Celeste has worked under eight Governors and eight Speakers; add three to that total, and you have the number of members she has served, nineteen; and

WHEREAS, since her induction into the legislative army, Celeste Thomas has served as an assistant for Representatives Bobby Wood, W.C. "Bubba" Pleasant, Phillip Johnson, Kevin Brooks, Mark Cochran, Bill McAfee, Ken Meyer, Dwight Henry, Paul Starnes, C.E. DePriest, Ira Murphy, Gwen Fleming, Clarence Blackburn, Peabody Ledford, Annabelle Clement O'Brien, Elliot Ozment, David Miller, Bill Richardson, and Ralph Yelton; and

WHEREAS, she has worked for the House of Representatives during the administration of eight Governors, Winfield Dunn, Ray Blanton, Lamar Alexander, Ned McWherter, Don Sundquist, Phil Bredesen, Bill Haslam, and Bill Lee; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Thomas has also worked under eight Speakers of the House, Ned McWherter, Ed Murray, Jimmy Naifeh, Kent Williams, Beth Harwell, Glen Casada, Bill Dunn, and Cameron Sexton, who was just a toddler when Celeste began her legislative tenure; and

WHEREAS, after nearly forty years wandering in the desert, Celeste Thomas got her just desserts when she was named House Employee of the Year in 2014; and

WHEREAS, throughout her legislative career, Celeste Thomas has displayed a subtle sense of humor through which she expresses her genuine admiration and respect for House members and their legislation; and

WHEREAS, the name Celeste is derived from the Latin word for heavenly, and that adjective certainly applies to Mrs. Thomas; she is known and loved throughout the Capitol complex for her sparkling personality, natural kindness, and easygoing attitude; and

WHEREAS, Celeste Thomas is the daughter of Charles and Bettye Latimer and has been married for forty-eight years to Bill Thomas; and

WHEREAS, Celeste and Bill Thomas are most grateful for the love and companionship they share with their son and daughter-in-law, Garth and Dana Thomas; their son and his fiancée, Nick Thomas and Casey Porter; and their grandchildren, Tucker Thomas and Trent Thomas; and

WHEREAS, a member of Cornerstone Church, Celeste Thomas has built her life around the three Fs of Faith, Family, and Friends; and

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2021, Celeste Thomas will take her final curtain call and exit stage right to life beyond the General Assembly; before she leaves the building for the last time, we wish to bid her a fond farewell and thank her for brightening our lives for so many years; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we honor the legendary Celeste Thomas on the occasion of her departure from the General Assembly and wish her all the best as she reaps the rewards of retirement.

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.