

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 207

By Pody

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory and military service of Rear Admiral Fran McKee.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to pay respect to the memory of those many valiant men and women who have served in the United States armed forces; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable person who had deep and special ties to Tennessee was Fran McKee, who on June 1, 1976, shattered the glass ceiling of the United States Navy when she became the first woman line officer in American history to be named a Rear Admiral; and

WHEREAS, born in Alabama, Fran McKee's family home was in Maury County, Tennessee, where her father, Thomas Walker McKee, was a railroad employee, farmer, and county court magistrate. Her mother, Geneva Lumpkins McKee, was a well-known community activist and long-time member of the Maury County Library Board; and

WHEREAS, well-educated, Fran McKee graduated from high school at the age of fifteen, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Alabama, and was commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Navy. She later obtained a Master of Science degree in international affairs from George Washington University and an honorary doctorate in public administration from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy/University; and

WHEREAS, throughout her career, Rear Admiral McKee was promoted through the officer ranks and assumed increased levels of responsibility, becoming the first woman to serve in many of her assigned commands; and

WHEREAS, Rear Admiral McKee was the senior female Navy officer on the Committee to Study Equal Rights for Women, whose findings resulted in widespread changes and opportunities for women in the military, and she also served as the head of a Naval Security

Group Command, Chief of Naval Education and Training, and Navy-wide Director of the Human Resources Management; and

WHEREAS, Rear Admiral McKee amassed an impressive cache of military awards during her distinguished career, including the Legion of Merit with Gold Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star; and

WHEREAS, community honors bestowed on Rear Admiral McKee included the Daughters of the American Revolution Medal of Honor and induction into the Alabama Academy of Honor and the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame. In her honor, the State of Tennessee has named a bridge on U.S. Highway 43 in Maury County in her memory; and

WHEREAS, a woman of great distinction and historical importance, Rear Admiral Fran McKee died on March 3, 2002, and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional human being, reflecting on her great accomplishments as an outstanding American patriot; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the life and memory of U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Fran McKee, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

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