

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 326

By Tidwell

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Birdsong Resort and Marina on its fiftieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to recognize those exemplary resort facilities that have made substantial contributions to tourism and economic development in the State of Tennessee, helping to build a better way of life for Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, one such business is Birdsong Resort and Marina, owned and operated by the Keast family since 1961 and located in Benton County on the shores of Birdsong Creek embayment which flows into the Tennessee River's beautiful Kentucky Lake; and

WHEREAS, providing family recreation for fifty years, Birdsong Resort and Marina's mission has been to promote fishing, hunting, camping, boating, touring and watching wildlife in a clean, neat and safe environment; and

WHEREAS, purchased by Bob Keast, Sr., and his wife, Lorraine Keast, with their life's savings in 1961, Birdsong Resort and Marina was a fulfillment of the couple's dream to "live the good life" and own a lakeside resort, raise a family and live the American Dream; and

WHEREAS, the Keasts and their three children, Georgene, Carrie and Bob, Jr., worked tirelessly that year to repair the lodge and cottages, build a concrete boat launch ramp, clear the waist-high weeds and cut the overgrown timber that covered the ten-acre site; and

WHEREAS, although the resort's first season saw only two or three customers, the Keast family's diligence and dedication would see Birdsong Resort and Marina prosper and grow over the next fifty years into a major tourist attraction, recreational complex and vacation community ranked in the top forty in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Bob and Lorraine Keast passed the reins to son Bob Keast, Jr., who, with the loving support of his wife Janis, has continued to advance Birdsong Resort and Marina, overseeing tremendous growth; and

WHEREAS, today, Birdsong Resort, Marina and Family Lakeside RV Campground features guided tours of the nation's only fresh-water pearl farm, a one hundred fifty slip marina, one hundred homes, RV and wilderness camping, pool facilities and a recreation pavilion among its many amenities as well as boat sales and service; and

WHEREAS, a highly successful businessman, Bob Keast, Jr., has expanded the family's business interests as the owner of North America's only Freshwater Pearl Farm and Museum and as owner and promoter of HeavyWeight Promotions, venturing into the field of musical entertainment as well as boat and travel shows, fishing tournaments and outdoor festivals; and

WHEREAS, a proud Tennessean, Mr. Keast played the integral role in the adoption of the Tennessee River Freshwater Pearl as Tennessee's official state gem in 2004 with the passage of Public Chapter 506; and

WHEREAS, active in the tourism industry both at the state and national level, Mr. Keast served as a delegate to President Bill Clinton's White House Conference on Tourism, traveled to Japan with Governor Phil Bredesen on an industrial recruitment mission and traveled with his father aboard the Tennessee Homecoming '86 train with Governor Lamar Alexander from Bristol to Memphis; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Keast is a prominent member of numerous industry, civic, and charitable organizations including the Northwest Tennessee Tourism Council, the Tennessee Kentucky Lake Vacation Association, the Marine Retailers Association, the Tennessee Outdoor Writers Association, the Tennessee Association of Campground Owners, a host of Chamber of Commerce groups across Tennessee as well as the Benton County Rescue Squad, Benton County Ducks Unlimited and the Tennessee Historical Society to name but a very few; and

WHEREAS, Bob Keast and the employees of Birdsong Resort and Marina are deeply devoted to their customers and to the surrounding community, proudly spreading the word to the world about the scenic splendor and family fun that can only be found in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is proud to specially recognize this exemplary business that daily exemplifies its commitment to the noble precepts of public service that support Tennessee's recognition as the "Volunteer State"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby congratulate Bob Keast, Jr. and the staff of Birdsong Resort and Marina upon the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary, salute the vision and legacy of the entire Keast family, and extend to them our best wishes for much continued success.

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