

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 349

By McDaniel

A RESOLUTION to honor Mary Jane Savage for her many accomplishments in the world of dance and important contributions to her community through her Dance Divas dance ministry.

WHEREAS, it is only fitting and proper that this General Assembly pause in its deliberations to honor and specially recognize one of our State's outstanding citizens; and

WHEREAS, nearly three score years ago, Mary Jane Savage was born on November 16, 1949 in Butler, Alabama, the daughter of a local pharmacist, John, and his wife, Janie; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane came into the world with tiny dance shoes permanently affixed to her newborn pink feet, whereupon she immediately executed a perfect combination triple time step-ball change on her way to the nursery; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane, ever-quick with a story, delights in recounting her Mother's entry into the competitive world of children's beauty pageants popular in that era, "The Shirley Temple Look Alike Contest," in which her Mother was, unfortunately, bested by other miniature Southern Belle's more eloquently curled and dimpled; and

WHEREAS, despite her knowledge of the capricious and often unattainable nature of professional stardom, Mary Jane never lost her perseverance in the pursuit of her dreams as she began her budding career while a mere toddler, studying under the direction of the legendary Mississippi Dance Instructor Miss Mary Alpha, who, as with all legends, such as Cher, renders last names unnecessary; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane's extraordinary talent became instantly apparent when, as a very young child, she was sensational in her solo performance as "Alice Blue Gown," leaving no doubt to those privileged to witness her performance that she was destined for a stellar career in dance; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane attended Mississippi College, an institution which did not embrace dancing, personally, professionally, or individually, thereby demanding immediate challenge by someone with undaunted boldness; Mary Jane found herself appointed as the first ever choreographer at the College and on her way to a distinguished career; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane married Johnny Savage, a Chiropractor, ultimately having two wonderful sons: Jeff, a noted music producer/engineer with multiple Dove and Grammy awards and nominations, and Scott, whose path drew him to the noble profession of public service where he serves as a police officer in Franklin, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane has worshipped at the musical altar of Lawrence Welk for her entire life, even exploring the possibility of being cloned as one of the Lennon Sisters, after clicking her heels and chanting “anda-one-anda-two,” she was able to experience her childhood dream of being asked to dance on the famed show during Mr. Welk’s appearance in Jackson, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, for many years, Mary Jane was the choreographer for the Miss Mississippi Beauty Pageant and, as a result, was honored to work with several Miss Americas; and

WHEREAS, for three decades, Mary Jane taught dance in Mississippi, as owner of one of the largest and most well-known studios in the state; during which time her dedication to, and influence on, young girls’ and women’s lives was unmatched, making tutelage under Mary Jane a guarantee to land one in the very top of selection for nearly any competition; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane not only taught dance, but served as an outstanding role model in every aspect of many young women’s lives, thus earning multiple honors, awards and the deep gratitude of students, families, and others for her positive influence; and

WHEREAS, upon her 1995 arrival in Tennessee, Mary Jane taught at the Brentwood Dance Academy, during which time, a budding, but as yet unknown “Tweenie,” also known as Hannah Montana, danced under Mary Jane’s tutelage; and

WHEREAS, during those years at Brentwood, Mary Jane led a dance class which eventually evolved into the Ministry known as the Dance Divas, a group consisting of women of varying ages and levels of dance skill, whose mission is to dance and bring laughter and joy to

those confined in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and all manner of other places into which light can be brought to those in need; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane literally owns a sense of style and creativity in all aspects of her persona – from her love of silver bracelets, colorful earrings, over-sized rings, pink stiletto boots, the color turquoise, and frequent use of the phrases such as “this is HUGE,” ”cuuuuuute!” and “FAB-ulous!,” to her inspired costume designer talent made legendary by her miraculous transformation of a felt tablecloth into a sequined Christmas apron; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane possesses the instincts of a shopping “Terminator,” undaunted by competition when in pursuit of potential costume apparel which she considers morally, legally and stylistically hers and hers alone; and

WHEREAS, her creativity, while much admired, occasionally tests the tolerance level of her dancers as witnessed by The Santa Claus Costumes, otherwise known as “The Sauna,” her attachment to which is resolute to the point that she has assured her dancers they shall wear the dreaded sweat suits until the garments fall in pieces from their bodies, but, in the historic tradition of one willing to take one for the team, Mary Jane, for the sake of performance art, dons the inspired Carmen Miranda Headpiece, the headdress which is fruitful and multiplies; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane possesses an innate sense of fun and adventure, which frequently results in daring and unexpected behavior, witnessed by her impromptu crashing of a holiday vocal performance to the astonishment of the singer, and the delight of the visibly bored audience; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane, properly schooled in the art of true southern grace and style, is known for her warmth and welcoming nature to all those who appear at her doorway, be they new neighbors or old friends, and is ever ready with the quintessential Southern beverage of choice, a pitcher of iced sweet tea; and

WHEREAS, Mary Jane is the embodiment of a loving and generous nature and blessed with the ability to look into the hearts of others and fill whatever needs lie within; and

WHEREAS, everyone who has the privilege of knowing Mary Jane feels an enormous amount of love and respect for her many wonderful personality traits and impressive professional achievements, all of which have a huge impact on the lives of many; and

WHEREAS, although Mary Jane has had many successes in her life, she would choose to be best known for her faith and her devotion to Jesus Christ, who guides her and defines her life actions and by such, brings immense joy and comfort to others; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we pause to honor and recognize the many accomplishments of Mary Jane Savage and her even more impressive and important contributions to every community in which she has lived.

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