

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 396

By Whitson

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Vanessa Pettigrew Bryan on her distinguished service to the State of Tennessee as the District Public Defender for the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their careers in public service; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Pettigrew Bryan is one such estimable person, who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Bryan served with distinction as the District Public Defender for the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District from 2006 until November 1, 2020, when she took her much-deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bryan enjoyed more than thirty years of service in the public defender's office, beginning her meritorious career in 1989 as an investigator before being promoted to assistant public defender two years later; and

WHEREAS, after fifteen years of service as an assistant public defender, Vanessa Bryan was elected to serve as the District Public Defender for the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District in 2006 and subsequently won re-election to multiple terms; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, Mrs. Bryan developed a sterling reputation as an advocate who went above and beyond for her clients and as a wonderful boss who was known for hiring high-quality staff; and

WHEREAS, born at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia, Vanessa Bryan grew up in South Florida and attended high school in Timonium, Maryland; she holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Maryville College, a post-graduate paralegal certification from the

University of Maryland, and a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the Nashville School of Law; and

WHEREAS, prior to joining the public defender's office, Mrs. Bryan was employed as a paralegal with the law firm of Bell, Cornelius & Shore in Rockville, Maryland; served as the first full-time magistrate of Williamson County under the Honorable Jane C. Franks, during which time she paid her own way through law school; was a law clerk for the U.S. Bankruptcy Trustee; and worked in private practice; and

WHEREAS, respected and admired by her peers within the legal community, Vanessa Bryan served as a hearing officer for the Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility, a member of the board of directors of the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Drug Court and the D.U.I. Drug Court, and Barrister and Master of the Inns of Court, John Marshall Chapter; and

WHEREAS, she is a member of the Williamson County Bar Association, the Tri-County Bar Association, the Tennessee Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Williamson County Republican Career Women, Leadership Franklin, Daughters of the American Revolution, Girl Scouts of America, the League of Women Voters, and the Yellow Rose Society Suffragette Memorial; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bryan has lent her time and talents to a number of educational, community, and charitable organizations, including the Nashville Rescue Mission, Women Are Safe of Centerville, the Literacy Council of Williamson County, Elam Center of Meharry Hospital, Belmont School of Law, Vanderbilt Law School, Nashville Auto Diesel College, University of Tennessee Law School, Nashville School of Law, Mending Hearts, Discovery House, Buffalo Valley, New Life Lodge, Mercy Clinic, Refuge Center, and Magdellan House; and

WHEREAS, devoted to her family, Vanessa Bryan enjoys the love and support of her husband, Oval Nelson Bryan III, and their children, Zachary Taylor Bryan and Joseph MacRae Bryan; and

WHEREAS, Vanessa Bryan exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Vanessa Bryan demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of members of the bar and bench and her community alike; 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 commend Vanessa Pettigrew Bryan on her honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as the District Public Defender for the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District and extend to her our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling 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.