

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 526

By Freeman

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Katherine Koonce,
Head of School at The Covenant School in
Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the tragic passing of Dr. Katherine Koonce, who served as the Head of School at The Covenant School in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, an inspiration to all who were fortunate to know her, Dr. Katherine Koonce was a lifelong educator who lived to love and encourage children, parents, and colleagues and ultimately gave her last full measure of devotion trying to protect her students; and

WHEREAS, born on December 18, 1963, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Katherine Anne Shirley Koonce was the daughter of Richard James Shirley and Anne Gueymard Shirley; she attended St. Joseph Catholic School and University High School before enrolling in Louisiana State University; and

WHEREAS, having transferred to Vanderbilt University after her freshman year, Dr. Katherine Koonce graduated *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Science degree in Special Education (Severe and Profound Disabilities) and began her career as an educator at the Susan Grey School at Vanderbilt; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, she was joined in holy matrimony with Richard S. Koonce III, and to their joyous union were born two children, David Winters Koonce and Anna Katherine Koonce; and

WHEREAS, shortly after their marriage, the Koonces moved to Georgia, where Dr. Koonce earned a Master of Education degree from Georgia State University and worked in several special education settings, then a private high school, and later established her own venture educating a small group of high school students; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, the Koonce family returned to Tennessee, relocating in Brentwood, and Dr. Koonce tutored students independently before accepting the position of Learning Services Director and, later, Academic Dean, at Christ Presbyterian Academy (CPA) in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, during this time, Dr. Katherine Koonce earned her Doctor of Education degree from Trevecca University, and after fifteen years at CPA, she was named the Head of School at The Covenant School in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure at The Covenant School, Dr. Koonce oversaw upgrades to school facilities and the implementation of a number of new student programs; she instilled high levels of professionalism and advancement for faculty, implemented leadership roles for students, and created school-based parent seminars for the Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, a fierce advocate for all children, Dr. Koonce strove to ensure a school culture at Covenant that valued character, creativity, and relationships; she stressed the importance of having Covenant's staff make their students feel loved and valued. She wrote, "To be known, to be loved, and to be prepared—this is our intention for every child"; and

WHEREAS, a woman of deep and abiding faith, Dr. Koonce was baptized at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Georgia; she was a longtime member of West End Community Church and had a deep affection for the mission of Koinonia Church in Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Katherine Koonce leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional educator and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. Katherine Koonce, reflecting fondly upon her

impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Dr. Koonce.

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.