

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 770

By Eldridge

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Robert James Barnett of Jackson.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Robert James Barnett; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Barnett was an exemplary public servant and consummate physician who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born in Holly Springs, Mississippi to Mary Lee Gordon and Levi Aubrey Barnett, Robert James Barnett was the youngest of four children; Dr. Barnett spent his formative years in Greenwood, Mississippi, and, because of his exemplary skills on the French horn, was awarded a scholarship to the Riverside Military Academy; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Barnett graduated from the University of Mississippi and Tulane University, earning his medical degree from Tulane in 1944 and interning at Southern Baptist Hospital in New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, known for treating the whole patient, Dr. Barnett served with empathy and compassion as the house physician for the Huey P. Long Charity Hospital in Pineville, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Robert James Barnett, M.D. heard the call of duty and bravely rendered sterling service to his country in the United States Army during both World War II and the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Barnett began his illustrious career in the armed forces as a captain and served as the Post Surgeon at the U.S. Air Force base at Surinam before being promoted to the Chief of Surgery at the U.S. Field Hospital in Trinidad; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Barnett resumed his private practice as a family physician from 1947 to 1950 in Laurel, Mississippi and then continued his relentless pursuit of knowledge by completing specialty training in orthopedic surgery in 1954 at the prestigious Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, once again displaying the patriotism and honor for which he was well known, Dr. Barnett traveled to Salzburg, Austria to become the Chief of Orthopedics at the U.S. Army Hospital and the consultant for Austria, Italy, and Trieste; because of his magnificent service in the European Theater, he was decorated by the Queen of England for treating Her Majesty's critically injured troops; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Barnett's gallant efforts did not go unnoticed, and, in 1955, his superiors required that he lend his unparalleled skills to the U.S. Army Hospital in Munich, Germany as the Chief of Orthopedic Surgery and consultant for the Southern Area Command; and

WHEREAS, because of his distinguished military career, Robert James Barnett rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel at the age of thirty-two and was one of the youngest holding that rank in the Army at that time; and

WHEREAS, an active member of his profession, Dr. Barnett stood as a Diplomat of the American Board of Orthopedic Surgeons and a member of the Tennessee Orthopedic Society, the Tennessee Medical Society, and the West Tennessee Consolidated Medical Assembly; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, Dr. Barnett became the only orthopedic surgeon practicing between Memphis and Nashville, in which position he earned the respect of his colleagues and patients alike due to the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, always a pioneer in his field, Dr. Barnett opened the first crippled children service clinic in Jackson and, for thirty years, handled orthopedic cases with acumen and alacrity for the West Tennessee Crippled Children Services before his retirement in December of 2007; and

WHEREAS, a gifted musician and generous philanthropist, Robert James Barnett was instrumental in establishing the Jackson Symphony League and the Jackson Symphony, in which he sat First Chair in the French horn section for over thirty years; and

WHEREAS, a talented athlete and who was known for his sportsman-like conduct on and off the court, Dr. Barnett and his tennis partners captured seventeen state doubles

championships, held the number one ranking in the State of Tennessee for several years and were ranked twelfth place in the nation; desiring to inspire others to take up the sport he so loved, Robert James Barnett built and developed the Jackson Tennis and Fitness Club in 1994, and, in 2002, Dr. Barnett was inducted into the Jackson-Madison County Sports Hall of Fame in honor of his lifetime of contributions to the game of tennis; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Barnett was an active and devout member of the First Baptist Church, in which he raised the banner of Christ with melodies from his French horn as a proud member of the First Baptist Church Orchestra; and

WHEREAS, Robert James Barnett was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Barnett was preceded in death by his devoted wife of forty-seven years, LaNita Ainsworth Barnett; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Barnett is survived by his loving wife of ten years, Naida B. Barnett; his brother and sister-in-law, Hubert and Shirley Barnett; his children and their spouses, LaNita B. Rawley, Janet B. and Larry Humphreys, Robert J., Jr. and Patricia Barnett, Kacky and Bob Kortenber, and Tina B. and Pete Howell; his grandchildren, Christina Taylor, Trey Rawley, U.S. Navy Lt. Brian Humphreys, Andrea Humphreys, Chrisley Barnett, Kelley Barnett, Nick Kortenber, Katie Kortenber, and Stuart Howell; his great-grandchildren, Amber Taylor, and Scarlett Humphreys, and Billy Kortenber; and a host of friends and loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert James Barnett leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional physician, public servant and human being; 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 honor the memory of Dr. Robert James Barnett, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his 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. Barnett.

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