

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1000

By Ramsey

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Gary J. Skolits for his service to the State of Tennessee on the occasion of his 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 higher education; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gary J. Skolits is one such estimable person who has served with distinction for more than thirty-eight years within the public higher education institutions of the State of Tennessee and recently announced that he will be taking his much-deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Gary Skolits began his illustrious career in public higher education in Tennessee in 1983 at Walters State Community College, where he served with acumen and alacrity as Dean of Planning, Research and Assessment; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure at Walters State, Dr. Skolits served on the college's executive leadership team, directed institutional strategic planning, conducted institutional research and fact book development, and directed the institution's Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirmation of accreditation process; and

WHEREAS, he also represented Walters State on the Tennessee Board of Regents strategic planning committee and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission performance funding review team; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Dr. Skolits joined the faculty of the Institute for Assessment and Evaluation at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) as a senior research associate and subsequently was named executive director in 2005; and

WHEREAS, as executive director, he led, managed, and published more than 150 evaluation studies through federal, state, and local evaluation contracts he secured that

generated net revenue of more than \$4 million, which funded up to four full-time professional staff, several part-time/temporary project staff, and several graduate research assistants; and

WHEREAS, his evaluation work was nationally recognized, as reflected in an appointment and subsequent five years of service with the national GEAR UP College Access Program National Evaluation Council, which was jointly sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, Dr. Skolits was also named an assistant professor and became the director of evaluation for the Ph.D. program, which is currently Evaluation, Statistics and Methodology; in that role, he transitioned the program to the department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, coordinated and supported the hiring of program faculty, and supported ongoing revisions of the Ph.D. program to ensure student and employer needs were met; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Dr. Skolits received a promotion to Associate Professor and was awarded tenure. In his faculty role, he regularly taught doctoral level courses in the following areas: program evaluation, research methods, instructional design, student assessment, project management, quantitative reasoning, and qualitative research methods; and

WHEREAS, he participated in more than 115 doctoral dissertation approval committees, including acting as committee chair for twenty doctoral students; his research and scholarship endeavors produced thirty-three peer-reviewed articles, three book chapters, and more than 150 evaluation studies; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Skolits is a senior editor for an international qualitative research journal in which he reviews and provides editorial support for journal research submissions; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Dr. Skolits earned a number of college awards for his faculty work and received the Graduate Student Association Award for student mentoring; he was awarded Associate Professor Emeritus status in Spring 2022; and

WHEREAS, a recognized leader among his peers, Dr. Skolits was elected by faculty senators in 2018 to serve as the UTK - UTIA Faculty Senate President. He maintained

leadership roles within the Faculty Senate's President Council through the following: President-Elect (2018-2019), Active President (2019-2020), and Immediate Past President (2020-2021); and

WHEREAS, during his Senate leadership, he oversaw three major achievements: the curriculum approval of courses implementing the major UT "Vol Core" General Education revision, support of the university faculty as they rapidly moved from in-class to online instruction in response to COVID-19, and the establishment of productive faculty senate relationships with new campus Chancellor Donde Plowman, new UT System President Randy Boyd, and new Governing Board chair John Compton; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Dr. Gary Skolits has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues, his students, and the people of the State of Tennessee; 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 extend to Dr. Gary J. Skolits our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

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.