

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1107

By Hawk

A RESOLUTION to recognize District Attorney General C. Berkeley Bell, Jr., 3rd Judicial District of the State of Tennessee, on the occasion of his retirement.

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

WHEREAS, C. Berkeley Bell is one such estimable person who has served with distinction for thirty-two years as District Attorney General of the 3rd Judicial District of the State of Tennessee, which comprises Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, and Hawkins Counties and encompasses both Criminal and Child Support divisions of the courts; and

WHEREAS, he is a native and life-long resident of Greeneville who has four times been elected by the people of his district to serve as their chief prosecutor; in August of this year, General Bell will step away from his elected office to resume private practice; and

WHEREAS, General Bell attended the University of Tennessee Law School and became a licensed attorney in 1974; soon thereafter, he joined his friend, John Rogers, and they practiced law in Greeneville until he entered public office in 1982; and

WHEREAS, one of the most definitive cases General Bell prosecuted realized success in the hallways of the State Capitol through advocacy efforts to strengthen criminal laws concerning child abuse; these efforts arose from the verdict that came from the jury who weighed the facts in the Scotty Trexler child abuse homicide case; and

WHEREAS, insufficient laws precluded a first degree murder verdict and the life without parole punishment the General believed the defendants duly deserved for the twenty-one-month-old child's death; therefore, he campaigned successfully to remove the statutory requirement for premeditation from Tennessee Code Annotated in order for the harsher criminal sentence to be meted out in similar trials in the future; and

WHEREAS, another high profile case that tested the limits of expertise and legal genius of the 3rd Judicial District prosecutors, led by General Bell, was the Lillelid family case, which involved the carjacking and shooting of a Knoxville family of four; the mother, father, and six-year-old daughter were mortally wounded by gunshots, and the two-year-old son was seriously injured but survived; and

WHEREAS, convictions yielding sentences of life without parole were the outcomes for all six Kentucky teenagers who perpetrated one of the most horrendous crimes ever committed on Tennessee soil; and

WHEREAS, C. Berkeley Bell has been a tried and true public servant of Tennesseans; he has served honorably and admirably, and he is most deserving of the highest regard for his service; and

WHEREAS, General Bell is grateful for the excellence of his staff of assistant district attorneys general and expert legal professionals who have been his mainstay over the course of his public service career; and

WHEREAS, C. Berkeley Bell is perhaps most grateful and appreciative of the love and support of his wife, Jane O'Dell Bell, with whom he is a faithful worshipper at St. James Episcopal Church; and

WHEREAS, he and Jane are especially proud of their three children, Erica, Berkeley, and Samuel, and they have been even more richly blessed with the love and joy that their grandchildren, Braxton and Jackson, have brought into their lives; and

WHEREAS, C. Berkeley Bell exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; throughout his estimable career; he has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues and a grateful public; and it is fitting for this legislative body to recognize him at this time; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to the State of Tennessee's 3rd Judicial District Attorney

General, C. Berkeley Bell, Jr., our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement from public office and every continued success in all of 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.