

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1110

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to honor, recognize, and name Former House Chief Clerk Burney T. Durham as "Chief Clerk Emeritus" of the Tennessee House of Representatives.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the General Assembly should recognize those former Officers of this body who have served with great distinction and who have distinguished themselves not only by the duration, but also by the quality of their service; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for the Tennessee House of Representatives to establish the position of "Chief Clerk Emeritus" of the Tennessee House of Representatives in recognition and appreciation of the magnitude of accomplishment, quality of service, personal character, and duration of service of former Chief Clerk of the House, Burney T. Durham; and

WHEREAS, the son of the late William Fred Durham and the late Dorothy Grace Ventress Durham of Gallatin, Burney T. Durham attended public schools in Gallatin; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, Mr. Durham earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science in 1978 and was named to the Order of the Gownsmen, an honorary organization based on academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, while at Sewanee he played on the varsity football team, where he was named a permanent Captain of the 1977 team, and was a part of the baseball team in his early years and subsequently served as a manager and statistician for the team; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Durham earned a Juris Doctorate from Memphis State University Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law in 1981; while there he served as the Managing Editor of the Law Review, 1980-1981, and on the Law Review Staff from 1979 to 1980. He received the Am Jur Awards for Excellence in Torts II, Contracts II, and Administrative Regulations and was the recipient of the Herff Legal Scholarship 1979-1981, which was based on academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, his published legal articles include, Long-arm Jurisdiction and Products Liability: Beyond World-Wide Volkswagen, 11 Memphis State University Law Review 351 (1981) and Constitutional Law – Broader Protection Provided by the Ex Post Facto Provision of the Tennessee Constitution Than by the Federal Constitution, 10 Memphis State University Law Review 378 (1980); and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham began his state service on February 1, 1987, having been chosen by Governor Ned McWherter to serve as the Deputy Legal Counsel to the Governor; he served in that capacity for approximately six years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Durham was named the Chief Clerk of the Tennessee House of Representatives, effective January 1, 1993, and took on the dual role as both Chief Clerk of the Tennessee House of Representatives and Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the House in November 2000; and

WHEREAS, serving as Chief Clerk of the House and Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the House until January 11, 2010, Mr. Durham served more than eighteen years as Chief Clerk, including over ten years in the dual role of Chief Clerk and Chief of Staff; and

WHEREAS, according to extensive research conducted by the Librarian of the Office of Legal Services, Burney T. Durham holds the distinction of having the longest continuous service as Chief Clerk of the House in the history of the Tennessee House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham served as a member of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries (ASLCS), an organization that was founded in 1943 to improve legislative administration and to establish better communication between clerks and secretaries throughout the United States and its territories. In 1974, ASLCS joined with several state legislative groups to form the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). From small beginnings, the Society has grown to include an active membership of over 300 principal clerks and secretaries and support staff. Today, the Society is the most active of NCSL's ten staff sections; and

WHEREAS, during his eighteen years as a member of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries, Burney T. Durham represented the State of Tennessee well and in particular the Tennessee House of Representatives by providing valuable service and

participation as an officer on many important committees including, Co-Chair of the Technology Committee, Vice-Chair of the Technology Committee, Chair of the Site Selection Committee, Vice-Chair of the Site Selection Committee, Vice-Chair of the Legislative Administrator Committee, and served as a member not only of those committees but also the Staff Support Committee, the Program Development Committee, the Membership and Communications Committee, and the Special Budget and Revenue Committee; and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham strived to keep the House in order, was excellent in reading aloud to the House the captions and text of various bills and resolutions, became an expert at parliamentary procedure as well as a master of the entire legislative process, and was tasked with, and succeeded at, making sure that all the many trains of the House of Representatives ran on time; and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham always strived to keep the House of Representatives on the cutting edge of technology and innovation thereby bringing more transparency and a better use of resources for the House; and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham, under the direction of Speaker Jimmy Naifeh, was instrumental working with staff to bring live video-streaming, delayed cable television broadcasts, and live public television broadcasts of House Floor Sessions and Committees to the public. In 1999, the House began testing monitors in the foyer outside the House Chamber. By the 2001-02 session, the whole session was viewable in the foyer. To increase the audience, the pilot was expanded in 2002 to streaming Internet users across the state, including some editorial boards. From the opening gavel in 2003, all floor sessions and all budget hearings were able to be seen live through the legislature's web site. In addition to live streaming, the House also archived the sessions and hearings for delayed viewing. This expanded over the coming years to include delayed broadcast by cable television stations across the State and finally in partnership with Nashville Public Television live broadcasts were begun in the middle Tennessee area with the intention to soon go statewide; and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham was instrumental in working with a very talented and innovative group of staff and others to improve the General Assembly web site. Together their hard work resulted in national awards for the top legislative web site in the Nation. In July of 2009, it was announced that the Tennessee State Legislature's new web site

(www.capitol.tn.gov) was the recipient of two national awards: "2009 Online Democracy Award" at the National Conference of State Legislatures' Legislative Summit, which recognizes the top legislative web site and the "2009 Digital Governance Award for Leadership in Digital Access" given by Granicus, Incorporated, which recognizes best practices in government transparency for demonstrating high levels of government information aggregation and web accessibility; and

WHEREAS, recognition of the Tennessee General Assembly's award-winning web site continued the next year with the 2010 Digital Governance Achievement Award from the Center for Digital Government. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding agency and department web sites as well as projects at the application and infrastructure level; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Durham also worked diligently with the staff on the Legislative Bill Tracking system, which is among the best in the nation, and on the restoration project of the House Chamber and renovation of the House committee rooms in the Legislative Plaza; and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham assisted Speaker Naifeh in creating the House Research Division, the Research Review, and the Office of Legislative Budget, publishing the House Chamber Book, revitalizing the House Manual, and successfully carrying out the aforementioned House Video project; and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham served for sixteen years as Chief Clerk under Speaker Jimmy Naifeh, served two years as Chief Clerk under Speaker Kent Williams, and served for a short period during the opening of the 107th General Assembly, including a few moments under Speaker Beth Harwell; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Burney T. Durham is fortunate to share both love and companionship with his two grown children, Ryan Barrett Durham and Amanda Margaret Durham; and

WHEREAS, Burney T. Durham is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this Body does hereby express its sincere appreciation and recognition of

the magnitude of accomplishment, quality of service, personal character, and duration of service of Burney T. Durham.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Burney T. Durham is hereby for now and forever recognized and named "Chief Clerk Emeritus" of the Tennessee House of Representatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Clerk Emeritus shall be entitled to such benefits and privileges as may be conferred now or in the future by the Speaker of the House and may perform such functions and duties as may be assigned now or in the future by the Speaker of the House, provided, however nothing herein shall be construed to extend any powers or duties granted to the Chief Clerk under House Rules to the Chief Clerk Emeritus.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be placed in the chamber of the House of Representatives, that a copy be presented to the "Chief Clerk Emeritus," and that this clause be deleted from such copies.