

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1194

By Brooks K

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Dr. Gary L. Riggins upon his exemplary service as Director of Graduate Studies in the Helen DeVos College of Education at Lee University.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that this legislative body should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and integrity throughout their careers in higher education; and

WHEREAS, Gary L. Riggins, Ed.D., is one such estimable person who served with distinction for thirteen years as the Director of Graduate Studies in the Helen DeVos College of Education at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, but is now stepping down to assume a professorship at the university; and

WHEREAS, in addition to performing his duties in an exemplary manner, Dr. Riggins became both the face and the heart of the Helen DeVos College of Education's graduate programs; and

WHEREAS, since becoming Director in 2001, Dr. Riggins has worked assiduously to expand the College's student body, and he succeeded mightily in that mission; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Lee University awarded master's degrees to thirty-four candidates; in 2013, one hundred twenty-four master's degrees were awarded to candidates majoring in education; and

WHEREAS, during his illustrious tenure as Director of Graduate Studies, one thousand eight candidates have been awarded a master's degree in education by Lee University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Riggins supervised the Master of Arts in Teaching and the Master of Education degree programs, and he also expanded the graduate program to include a master's degree in education leadership and initiated the offering of the Education Specialist degree; and

WHEREAS, under his astute leadership, the graduate program received accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and maintained its accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Dr. Riggins received a grant from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission Diversity in Teaching Project to provide scholarships for minority students and those teaching in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) areas who agree to teach in the inner city and other underserved areas; Lee is one of only three universities in Tennessee to receive the grant, and its program was named Systematic Techniques to Equalize Personnel in Schools (STEPS) by Dr. Riggins; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman of great wisdom and empathy who carefully listens to others, Dr. Riggins served as recruiter and mentor to several members of the graduate faculty; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his exemplary service on the Lee campus, he served as president of the Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools in 2011-2012; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Riggins created student teaching placements in Africa and accompanied student teachers to Ghana and Sierra Leone; he also spent a semester in Cambridge with Lee students; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Riggins worked closely with the English Language Institute of China (ELIC) in coordinating graduate programs and spent time in Thailand teaching and meeting with ELIC students; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Riggins possesses unparalleled writing skills, and his prowess with the pen was recognized by the graduate faculty with the creation of the "Gary Riggins Writing Award," which is presented annually to a graduate student who has demonstrated exceptional writing skills; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Riggins has concern and compassion for others as evidenced by his creation of the "Backyard Program" of Lee University, which connects Lee students with at-risk K-12 students in local communities; and

WHEREAS, he also faithfully serves at the Caring Place, an organization dedicated to assisting lower income families in Cleveland and Bradley County; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Dr. Gary Riggins has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues, his students, and a grateful public; 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 hereby honor Dr. Gary L. Riggins upon his exemplary service as Director of Graduate Studies in the Helen DeVos College of Education at Lee University, commend his ongoing commitment to excellence in higher education, and wish him all the best in his newest endeavor at Lee University.

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