

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1342

By Martin B

A RESOLUTION to recognize Dr. Walter G. Butler for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

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 public service; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walter G. Butler is one such estimable person, who has distinguished himself as a professional of the greatest dedication, ability, and integrity; and

WHEREAS, after receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology/Chemistry from the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1975, Dr. Butler was employed as an admissions counselor at Bethel College in the administration of President Dr. Bill Odom; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, at the age of twenty-four, Dr. Butler ran for the office of Carroll County Trustee and won seventy-six percent of the popular vote, thereby becoming one of the youngest county-wide officials ever elected in Carroll County; he continued to serve in that role for the next sixteen years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walter G. Butler married the love of his life, Jennifer Pruett, in 1980, and they are the proud parents and in-laws of three sons and three daughters-in-law and the adoring grandparents of twelve grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, in 1985, Dr. Butler earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting from Bethel College; and

WHEREAS, building on his successes as a Carroll County Trustee, he successfully ran for the office of Carroll County Executive in 1994 and won with seventy-four percent of the popular vote; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walter G. Butler's estimable career in public service flourished under Governor Don Sundquist, who, in 1996, appointed him to serve as Tennessee's Director of State Parks, in which position he oversaw fifty-four State parks and 1,600 employees; in 2000, he was appointed by the governor to serve as Deputy Commissioner of Personnel for the State and its workforce of 38,000 employees; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Dr. Butler was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the newly merged Department of Labor and Workforce Development, overseeing a budget of \$193 million; in 2002, he was appointed Commissioner of Personnel by Governor Don Sundquist; and

WHEREAS, he returned to the field of higher education in 2003, when he was appointed to the position of Director of Business Affairs at Bethel College in the administration of President Dr. Robert Prosser; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walter G. Butler received a Master of Business Administration degree from Bethel College in 2008; the following year, Bethel College's board of trustees recognized that Dr. Butler's leadership was instrumental in growing the college and shaping its new identity as Bethel University; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, Dr. Butler was named Executive Vice President for the College of Liberal Arts at Bethel University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walter G. Butler was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by Bethel University's Board of Trustees in 2013 for "his contributions to Bethel University, the State of Tennessee, and to his fellow man"; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, Dr. Butler was named Interim President of Bethel University by the school's board of trustees, which soon thereafter appointed him to serve as president; and

WHEREAS, after ten years of distinguished service as President of Bethel University, Dr. Walter G. Butler took a well-deserved retirement in 2023; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Butler's steadfast commitment to educational excellence helped Bethel University achieve outstanding academic success and produce some of the best and brightest students in our State and nation; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career in public service, Dr. Walter G. Butler demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues, his students, and the citizens he so ably served; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to Dr. Walter G. Butler our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, offering our deepest gratitude for his distinguished service to this State, and wishing him 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.