

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 12

By Norris

A RESOLUTION recognizing the University of Memphis football team and head coach Justin Fuente.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are honored to recognize those athletic programs which bring honor and acclaim to their universities and to this State; and

WHEREAS, the University of Memphis football program, led by head coach Justin Fuente, is one such estimable program which captured a share of the 2014 American Athletic Conference (AAC) title and won the Miami Beach Bowl on December 22, 2014; and

WHEREAS, in fitting recognition of his success at the helm of the Tigers program, head coach Justin Fuente garnered the AAC Coach of the Year Award and was named as a finalist for the 2014 Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award; and

WHEREAS, following Memphis's 55–48 double overtime win over Brigham Young University (BYU) in the Miami Beach Bowl, the Tigers clinched their first ten-win season since 1938; and

WHEREAS, the team's conference championship is the Tigers' first since 1971, an incredible accomplishment for a football program which won a combined five games in the three seasons before Justin Fuente became the head coach of the Tigers three years ago; and

WHEREAS, the Tigers played with admirable focus and fortitude in the Miami Beach Bowl, displaying remarkable resilience against a talented opponent. After leading most of the game, the Tigers fell behind late in the fourth quarter, but they remained undaunted; and

WHEREAS, quarterback Paxton Lynch connected with receiver Keiwone Malone twice during the team's final drive in regulation time, once to convert a pivotal fourth down and again for the game-tying touchdown catch in the final minute of the game; and

WHEREAS, after BYU kicked a field goal in the first overtime period, Tiger kicker Jake Elliot boomed a fifty-four-yarder, a powerful kick which would have been good from much longer, to knot the game at 48–48; and

WHEREAS, Paxton Lynch found Roderick Proctor in the end zone at the beginning of the second overtime period to put the Tigers up by seven. In total, the Tigers scored seven touchdowns in the game, four on the ground and three through the air; and

WHEREAS, DeShaughn Terry intercepted a BYU pass on the subsequent drive, clinching the bowl win for the Tigers; and

WHEREAS, now in his third year as the head coach of the Tigers football team, Justin Fuente has rendered sterling service as a coach, leader, teacher, and mentor, and his dedication to excellence and his devotion to his players and fellow coaches is without peer; and

WHEREAS, his excellence both on the field and off has not only gained recognition from his peers, his players, and this State, but has also garnered the respect and admiration of the entire nation, as exhibited by his winning of the AAC Coach of the Year Award and his nomination by the members of the Football Writers Association of America as a finalist for the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award, one of college football's most prestigious awards; and

WHEREAS, after a season which inspired the students and faculty of the University of Memphis, the City of Memphis, and the State of Tennessee, it is wholly fitting that this body recognize the Memphis Tigers football team and head coach Justin Fuente on their success; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby commend and congratulate the players, coaches, and trainers of the University of Memphis Tigers football team on their 2014 season, applauding their capture of the AAC championship title and a win in the inaugural Miami Beach Bowl and extending our best wishes to them for success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we commend and congratulate head coach Justin Fuente, winner of the 2014 AAC Coach of the Year Award and finalist for the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award.

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