

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 37

By Southerland

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Walters State
Community College upon its fiftieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we recognize the fiftieth anniversary of Walters State Community College (WSCC), an accredited public comprehensive community college committed to quality education and open access that operates within the governance of the Tennessee Board of Regents; and

WHEREAS, Walters State Community College opened in 1970 without a building but with a mission to make higher education affordable and accessible; over the last half-century, the college's students, faculty, staff, and supporters have made WSCC a premier, nationally recognized community college; and

WHEREAS, in the college's first year, students met at downtown churches; the first building on the Morristown campus opened the following year, and today, the campus includes seven buildings; and

WHEREAS, WSCC has continued to grow to meet the need and demand for affordable and accessible higher education. The Sevier County campus has four buildings, three of which were funded entirely through local donations, and the Claiborne County campus moved to the former Claiborne County High School in 2010 following extensive renovations. The Niswonger Campus in Greeneville was dedicated in 2019; and

WHEREAS, the college opened the Great Smoky Mountains Expo Center in White Pine in 1995; the Expo Center offers agribusiness events and activities, and today, it hosts more than sixty events annually; and

WHEREAS, enrollment has grown from fewer than 500 students in the college's first year to more than 6,000 students today, and alumni are welcomed at colleges and universities

across the United States; more than ninety percent of the graduates in technical education programs are employed in their field of study within six months of graduation; and

WHEREAS, a nursing program was established in the first two years of the college, and today, the program is offered at the Morristown, Greeneville, and Sevierville campuses; the program's rigorous training and hands-on clinicals are well-regarded by prospective students and employers alike; and

WHEREAS, WSCC was one of the first colleges to offer the Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy for college credit, and the school has been named a Tennessee Board of Regents Center for Excellence in Public Safety; and

WHEREAS, over the years, the college has welcomed a number of prominent speakers, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, celebrated actress Cicely Tyson, and President Gerald Ford, who visited the school in 1982. WSCC has also hosted international speakers, performances, and celebrations as part of Global Connections, an initiative to prepare graduates to compete in a global economy; and

WHEREAS, known for its many contributions to the arts, WSCC choirs and drama groups are active on the Morristown, Greeneville, and Sevierville campuses, and the Walters State Choir has been invited to perform at Carnegie Hall several times. Each February, Appalachian scholars and students join bestselling authors for a conference honoring Hamblen County native Mildred Haun, author of *The Hawk's Done Gone*; and

WHEREAS, the Walters State Debate Team is known as the team to beat, having won numerous State titles and the 2006 national championship; and

WHEREAS, the Walters State Senators and Lady Senators are consistent competitors in the Tennessee Community College Athletic Association and the National Junior College Athletic Association, with athletes in cross country, volleyball, men's and women's basketball, baseball,

softball, and golf. These teams regularly compete for national titles, winning the 2006 national title in baseball and the 2014 national title in golf; and

WHEREAS, over the last fifty years, Walters State Community College has educated thousands of students, who have improved the quality of life and raised the standard of living in the counties of Hamblen, Sevier, Claiborne, Greene, and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Walters State Community College celebrated a half-century of service to East Tennessee and this State in 2020, and it is most appropriate that we recognize the institution on this special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Walters State Community College on the celebration of fifty years of dedicated service to the State of Tennessee and its continuing commitment to excellence in higher education.

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.