

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 79

By Dickerson

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Jed DeKalb for his exemplary service to Tennessee as Chief State Photographer.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are pleased to recognize a gentleman who has expertly documented the history and heritage of Tennessee via photography for the past thirty-eight years, traveling from Mountain City to Memphis, but never Reverie, to chronicle the State's significant events and milestones; and

WHEREAS, Jed DeKalb has been a professional photographer for Tennessee Photo Services (TPS) for the past thirty-eight years and has served as Chief State Photographer for more than thirty years of his illustrious tenure; and

WHEREAS, Mr. DeKalb has served under five Tennessee governors (Lamar Alexander, Ned McWherter, Don Sundquist, Phil Bredesen, and Bill Haslam) and witnessed numerous changes in the governmental and political landscapes of the State, yet he has always wisely adhered to the personal ethic of being neither a Democrat nor a Republican but rather a first-class photographer; and

WHEREAS, overall, Jed DeKalb has covered nine State of the State addresses, ten gubernatorial inaugurations, the end of nine legislative sessions, three bond rating presentations, and two National Governors Association meetings in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, he is somewhat of a lucky charm, as all five governors for whom he has worked were elected to two terms, and all the bond rating presentations he has covered resulted in AAA bond ratings; and

WHEREAS, Jed DeKalb has documented numerous State milestones during his career, including the public announcement of the location of the Saturn plant in Spring Hill,

Homecoming '86, the groundbreaking ceremony for the Nissan plant, Tennessee's Bicentennial, and both the fiftieth and seventy-fifth anniversaries of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and

WHEREAS, although he has enjoyed exclusive access to State officials and confidential information about State projects, Mr. DeKalb has ever been the soul of discretion; he jokingly attributes his longevity and job security with the State to the photos he never made public; and

WHEREAS, he has distinguished himself as a photographer and professional during his career, but his tenure with TPS has not always been smooth sailing; and

WHEREAS, his application for employment was initially rejected, but Commissioner Bill Koch wisely intervened and reevaluated his credentials, which included photographing the cover for ZZ Top's legendary *Fandango!* album as a college student, and in December 1980, Mr. DeKalb joined TPS under the tutelage of Pulitzer Prize recipient Robin Hood; and

WHEREAS, on his first photo assignment with TPS, security removed him from a closed meeting because Governor Alexander had mistaken him for a member of the press; and

WHEREAS, returning from the Humboldt Strawberry Festival in the cramped State plane with Governor McWherter, Jed DeKalb, in the interest of job security, relinquished his seat to several baskets of strawberries, refusing the governor's offer to change places; and

WHEREAS, other adventures include an allergic reaction to goldenrod while hunting with Governor McWherter and a secret signal to Governor Haslam that was misinterpreted by Jenna Bush; and

WHEREAS, Mr. DeKalb has earned great praise from legislators, cabinet members, and judges for his work but especially from the five governors under whom he served; Governor Haslam praised his passion for the job; Governor Alexander noted his "exceptional professional personality"; and now U.S. Senator Alexander lauded his "wonderful artistic eye" and "tremendous work ethic"; and

WHEREAS, Jed DeKalb will help photograph the incoming administration of Governor Bill Lee, but his final assignment as Chief State Photographer before retirement will be documenting the final days of Governor Haslam's administration; and

WHEREAS, born in Montevideo, Uruguay, John Ernest "Jed" DeKalb, Jr., is a graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and a "Vol For Life"; while an undergraduate, he began his photography career while working on the school's newspaper, the *Daily Beacon*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. DeKalb is looking forward to his approaching retirement, as it will enable him to spend more time with his family, which includes his wife, Nancy; their daughter, Maggie DeKalb; their daughter and son-in-law, Emma DeKalb Nichols and Ben Nichols; and their step-granddaughter, Ava Nichols; both Maggie and Emma were frequent models for their dad when they were young, and photographs of them were featured in numerous State promotional brochures; and

WHEREAS, for thirty-eight years, Jed DeKalb has been fortunate for his hobby to double as his profession, and the State of Tennessee and its officials have been the beneficiary of his professional excellence and passion for photography; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Jed DeKalb for his exemplary service to Tennessee as Chief State Photographer, salute his remarkable career spent chronicling the State's history, heritage, and milestones, and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success and happiness during his retirement.

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