

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 197

By Bowling

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Camp Clements upon its ninetieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, organized in 1928 to promote leadership, personal growth, and career success among high school agricultural students, FFA plays an important role in ensuring the growth and prosperity of agriculture in Tennessee and the nation; and

WHEREAS, that same year, the Norman Anderson Ward family donated twenty-five acres in Van Buren County for the purpose of establishing the first FFA-owned camp in the country; the camp sits on the banks of the Caney Fork River at the base of the Cumberland Mountains; and

WHEREAS, Ray S. Ward, Norman Ward's son and an agriculture teacher at Central High School in Cookeville, had been hosting Future Farmers of Tennessee (FFT) chapters that camped on this tract of land for two years; and

WHEREAS, at the first FFT State Convention in 1928, Dudley M. Clements, the first permanent State supervisor of agriculture education for the Tennessee Department of Education, proposed the creation of a training center and haven of rest for members; upon its approval, members and chapter advisors pledged monetary investments and made the camp their first project; and

WHEREAS, local FFA chapters raised \$6,400 to construct the administration building, a permanent structure that was designed to house up to 200 students at one time; it opened in 1931 and provided lodging for 543 attendees in its first year; and

WHEREAS, delegates at the State convention voted to name the camp "Camp Clements" in honor of Mr. Clements; the first camp director was George Blake Thackston, supervisor of agriculture education in Middle Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, for more than two decades, Camp Clements was focused on recreation and promoted as a week's vacation for hardworking FFA members from every section of the State, with activities and programs for chapters to earn awards each week; by 1958, more than 20,000 FFA members had visited the camp; and

WHEREAS, Camp Clements took a break for two years while a study committee worked on its future usability, and in 1960, delegates at the State convention voted to reopen the camp as a leadership training center; and

WHEREAS, Kenneth K. Mitchell, an agriculture teacher at Dickson High School, joined the Tennessee Department of Education agriculture education staff on February 15, 1961, and he was charged by Assistant Commissioner of Vocational Education H.C. Colvett with the responsibility of developing a leadership training program for FFA officers and leaders to be implemented at Camp Clements; the new focus on competitive recreation as well as leadership development began in June 1961 and continues today; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee appropriated funds to build additional facilities in 1963 and 1995 and to make improvements to the camp in 2011 and 2017; and

WHEREAS, since its founding, Camp Clements has made a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success, impacting more than 2,400 agricultural youth from across Tennessee each year, and this exemplary institution should be recognized; 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 Camp Clements for providing ninety years of leadership opportunities to FFA students across the State and extend our best wishes for every future success.

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