

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 274

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Betty Sue Patton Berry of Knoxville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Betty Sue Patton Berry; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Berry was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Berry was born on August 1, 1930, in Russellville, Alabama, to Audrey and Bill Patton. She grew up the Tri-Cities area of Alabama and met her future husband at the age of twelve while living in Spring Valley; and

WHEREAS, at the age of sixteen, Mrs. Berry graduated from Deshler High School in 1947, having skipped eighth grade. She began attending classes at Florence State College, now the University of North Alabama, where she completed two years of course work; and

WHEREAS, she moved to Knoxville in the mid-1960s and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Tennessee. Shortly after, she began teaching biology at Central High School in 1967; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, Mrs. Berry obtained her master's degree from the University of Tennessee. She continued teaching at Central High School and served as Science Department Head, in which position she earned the respect of her colleagues and students alike for the exemplary quality of her work, until her retirement in 1990; and

WHEREAS, throughout her career in education, she received a number of accolades and awards, including Outstanding Secondary Science Teacher from the Tennessee Academy of Science, 1976; Outstanding Biology Teacher from the National Association of Biology Teachers, 1977; and the Dan Y. Boring Professional Educator Award (Teacher of the Year), 1990; and

WHEREAS, following her retirement from teaching, Mrs. Berry expanded her volunteer work, driving for Volunteer Assisted Transportation and working with the FISH Pantry and Contact Ministries. In 2012, she was a Covenant Senior Honors awardee for her work serving in the community; and

WHEREAS, she served in various leadership positions for the Knox County Retired Teachers Association as well as the Knoxville chapter of AARP. During her tenure as legislative chair for both organizations, she made frequent trips to Nashville to advocate for issues concerning education and senior citizens; and

WHEREAS, she was awarded the Regional Andrus Award by AARP for her dedication and service, and the Knox County Retired Teachers Association presented a scholarship in her name in 2019; and

WHEREAS, she was also a member of a number of professional organizations, including Phi Delta Kappa, Delta Kappa Gamma, Knox County Education Association, Tennessee Education Association, and National Education Association; and

WHEREAS, an avid jogger, she participated in most of the EXPO 10K and 5K races from their inception in 1978 until 2016. She would often be seen walking four to five miles in Lakeshore Park or her Rocky Hills neighborhood, and she would traditionally lead her family on long treks each Thanksgiving; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Berry was an active and devout member of Calvary Baptist Church, which she served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Berry was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Betty Berry is survived by her children, Susan (Pike) Jones, Kim (Greg) Detwiler, and Pat (Lisa) Berry; her grandchildren, Jenny (Daniel) Smith, Patrick (Sarah) Berry, Jessica Detwiler and her fiancé, Matt Brooke, and Peyton Berry; her three great-granddaughters, Savi Smith, Lily Berry, and Autumn Berry; and siblings, George Patton and Patsy Nesbitt; and

WHEREAS, she was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Clyde W. Berry; and three brothers, Huston Patton, James Patton, and Billy Bob Patton; and

WHEREAS, Betty Sue Patton Berry leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Betty Sue Patton Berry, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Berry.

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.