

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 341

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Captain Rosemary Mariner of Norris.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Captain Rosemary Mariner; and

WHEREAS, Captain Mariner was an aviation pioneer who broke through the ranks of the all-male military aviator corps to become the United States Navy's first female attack-jet pilot; she was laid to rest with full military honors, and in tribute to her life and legacy, the Navy conducted its first-ever all-female flyover during her burial service; and

WHEREAS, born in Harlingen, Texas, Captain Mariner grew up in San Diego, California; she was the daughter of a Navy nurse and an Air Force pilot, who was killed in a plane crash when she was only three years old; and

WHEREAS, at the age of seventeen, Captain Rosemary Mariner earned her private pilot's license, and in 1972, when she was only nineteen, she graduated from Purdue University with a degree in aeronautics, becoming the first female graduate of the same Purdue aviation program that Amelia Earhart worked with. After graduating, she joined the Navy; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, when the Navy lifted its ban on naval aviation training for women, Captain Mariner was accepted into the first class of female Navy pilots; the following year, she earned her wings, becoming the first woman to fly a tactical attack jet, the A-4E/L Skyhawk and the A-7E Corsair II; and

WHEREAS, Captain Rosemary Mariner's impressive list of accomplishments includes other firsts: she was among the first women to serve aboard a Navy warship (USS *Lexington*, 1982), qualifying as a Surface Warfare Officer; was the first woman to command a military aviation squadron (Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 34 (VAQ-34)), based in Point Mugu, California; and was among the first four women promoted to the rank of captain in the Navy; and

WHEREAS, though Captain Mariner had broken through many barriers, barriers remained for women in the military; even as she was in command of VAQ-34 during the Gulf War, military rules at the time prohibited women from flying combat missions; she made it her mission to rectify this, leading successful efforts in the 1990s to convince the federal government to do away with the combat exclusion rule for women aviators, which it did in 1993; and

WHEREAS, Captain Rosemary Mariner enjoyed a twenty-four-year career in the U.S. Navy, during which time she attended the National War College in Washington, D.C., earning a master's in national security strategy, and served on the staff of the Joint Chiefs in the Pentagon; her final military assignment was as the chairman of the Joint Chief's Chair in Military Strategy at the National War College; and

WHEREAS, before her retirement in 1997, Captain Rosemary Mariner logged more than 3,500 flight hours in fifteen different aircraft and made seventeen aircraft carrier landings, one of the ultimate tests of a military aviator; and

WHEREAS, during retirement, Captain Mariner served as a resident scholar at the Center for the Study of War and Society in the History Department at the University of Tennessee, where she lectured on military history, emphasizing the intersections of war and conscience; she also continued to serve as an advisor on national defense policy and women's integration into the military for ABC News, PBS, and the Department of the Navy; and

WHEREAS, she was an active and devout member of the St. Joseph Church in Norris, where she served faithfully for many years and taught Bible study; and

WHEREAS, Captain Rosemary Mariner was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, she enjoyed the loving companionship of her husband of thirty-nine years, retired Navy Commander Tommy Mariner, and was the proud mother of Emmalee Mariner; and

WHEREAS, Captain Rosemary Mariner was a trailblazer for female Naval aviators; the women who serve today without restrictions owe a great debt to her intrepid spirit and tenacity; and

WHEREAS, Captain Mariner 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 ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Captain Rosemary Mariner, 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 Captain Mariner.

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