

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 418

By Kelsey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Judge Curtis S. Person, Jr., of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of our former colleague, Curtis S. Person, Jr., who devoted his life to serving the Memphis community and the State of Tennessee as a legislator and judge; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Curtis Person, Jr., earned his Bachelor of Science degree from The University of Memphis and his law degree (LL.B.) from the University of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Senator Curtis Person, Jr., served forty years in the General Assembly, thirty-eight years in the Senate and one term in the House of Representatives, and during his illustrious tenure on Capitol Hill, he was prominent as a dedicated and well-informed legislator who always voted his conscience; and

WHEREAS, during his twenty years as Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Person provided visionary leadership and an unparalleled knowledge of the rules of procedure in guiding committee members through the process of carefully deliberating, fully debating, and frequently amending the multitude of bills dealing with complex legal issues that were referred to the committee; and

WHEREAS, among the many bills that he sponsored as a legislator, Senator Person was most proud of the legislation he passed that required the PKU test to be administered to newborn babies, thus helping countless children and families; and

WHEREAS, he received many honors during his legislative tenure, including a certificate of appreciation for his dedication and outstanding service to the citizens of Tennessee signed by all five members of the Tennessee Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, when he retired from legislative service in 2006, Senator Person shared the distinction of serving the longest uninterrupted term in the Tennessee General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, at the age of seventy-two, when most people would have been eyeing complete retirement, Curtis Person, Jr., desired only to build upon his legacy of community service; he thus continued serving in elected office as the Judge for the Shelby County Juvenile Court for an eight-year term; and

WHEREAS, prior to that, Senator Person had dedicated his non-legislative career to helping children, who held a very special place in his heart, as the Shelby County Juvenile Court's Chief Referee for eighteen years and as its Chief Legal Officer from 1995 until his election to the bench; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure on the Shelby County Juvenile Court bench, Judge Person was honored with many awards and accolades, including the Kenneth A. Turner Juvenile Justice Award from the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, the Equal Access to Justice Award from the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services, and an appreciation award from the Tennessee Juvenile Justice Community; and

WHEREAS, in honor of Judge Person's unparalleled commitment to the people of Tennessee, Governor Phil Bredesen designated May 13, 2009, as "A Day of Recognition for Senator Curtis S. Person, Jr."; and

WHEREAS, Judge Person truly loved his Memphis Tigers and was the founder and charter president of the University of Memphis (UM) Tiger Rebounders Club; he received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1982 and 2007 and the UM Eye of the Tiger Award in 2007, and "The Senator Curtis S. Person Student Plaza" on the UM campus is dedicated in his honor; and

WHEREAS, this exemplary public servant is survived by his five children and stepchildren, Kathleen Person Longoria, Curtis S. Person III (Barbara), Dr. Patrick R. Person (Amy), Charles Couch (Linda), and Christopher S. Person; his sister, Dr. Patti Person Ray

(Barry); his grandchildren, Dr. Ritchie Longoria (Chris), Jesse Longoria (Kailyn), Katie Longoria, Curtis S. Person IV, Cody Person, Kendall Person, Austin Person (Amy), Caleb Person (Abbey), Carson Couch, and Cameron Couch; his great-grandchildren, Paxton, Ryder, Henley, and Monroe Longoria; and his nephews, Wade Crump (Chad) and Wesley Crump (Stephanie); and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his beloved wife of forty-seven years, Geraldean Smith Person, and his parents, Curtis and Helen Person; and

WHEREAS, Curtis Person, Jr., devoted nearly fifty years to helping the children and families of this great State as a legislator and judge, and his life of purpose and commitment should be appropriately commemorated; 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 the memory of Judge Curtis S. Person, Jr., of Memphis, reflecting fondly upon his many accomplishments in the General Assembly and on the bench, and extend to his family and friends our deepest sympathy and condolences.

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.