

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 734

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor Mira Kimmelman on her life of purpose and commitment.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pleasure in paying tribute to a lady who survived the horrors of the Holocaust to lead a productive life in America and who now shares her experiences as a cautionary tale against hate, intolerance, and bigotry; and

WHEREAS, this incredible lady, Mira Kimmelman, has resided in Oak Ridge since 1964, but her early years were lived amid the atrocities and inhumanity of the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, born Mira Mary Ryczke (Miriam is her Hebrew name) to Eugenia Hammer Ryczke and Moritz Ryczke on September 17, 1923, in a suburb of the Baltic seaport of Danzig (what is now Gdansk, Poland), Mrs. Kimmelman was twelve years old when the Nazi regime began its systematic persecution and segregation of Jews; and

WHEREAS, when World War II broke out in 1939, she and her family, along with thousands more Jewish families, were forced from their home and taken to one of the ghettos in Warsaw, where they faced isolation, deprivation, and starvation; and

WHEREAS, in October 1942, the Germans began relocating Jews for forced labor, including her father and brother; one fateful day, her entire family reported to the train station for assignment, and miraculously, Mrs. Kimmelman was diverted from this death march to work; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Kimmelman was one of about 600 people, among 15,000 to 20,000 Jews from the ghettos, whose lives were spared that day; she never saw her mother or grandparents again; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Kimmelman and her father, uncle, and brother were then taken to Blizyn concentration camp, where they were forced to perform hard labor and suffered from inhumane physical punishment, illness, and unsanitary conditions; and

WHEREAS, in July 1944, Mrs. Kimmelman and her father and brother were evacuated with thousands of others to Auschwitz, and she saw her sixteen-year-old brother, Benno, for the last time at the gates of the reviled death camp; and

WHEREAS, in January 1945, the Germans evacuated Auschwitz before the advance of the Russian army; in -30-degree temperatures and three feet of snow, 60,000 prisoners were evacuated, and after two days of walking, they were loaded into open cattle cars in such large numbers and packed so tightly that they were unable to move; and

WHEREAS, as Mrs. Kimmelman relied on her memories of happier times with her family in order to survive, she and her father arrived at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp two and one-half weeks later; and

WHEREAS, morality and humanity finally prevailed on April 15, 1945, when the camp was liberated by Allied forces; Mrs. Kimmelman was only twenty-one years old, but she had already suffered a lifetime of loss and agony; and

WHEREAS, overall, Mrs. Kimmelman spent five and one-half years in ghettos and labor and concentration camps in Germany and Poland; she and her father were the only two members of her immediate family of twenty who survived the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, on May 19, 1946, Mira Ryczke married Max Kimmelman, also a survivor of the Holocaust; they enjoyed nearly forty-five years of marriage until his death on February 25, 1990; and

WHEREAS, the Kimmelmans immigrated to the United States in 1948 and moved to Oak Ridge in August 1964; Mrs. Kimmelman has been a member of the Oak Ridge Synagogue since that time; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Kimmelman is most grateful for the love and support she receives from her two sons, Benno and Gene Kimmelman, and four grandchildren, Melanie, Michael, Max, and Ellie; and

WHEREAS, she has written two books about her life, *Echoes from the Holocaust* and *Life Beyond the Holocaust*; and

WHEREAS, for many years, Mrs. Kimmelman has been committed to sharing her experiences during the Holocaust, even though it is a horrifying story to tell; and

WHEREAS, she tells and retells her story to honor the victims who cannot speak for themselves because they are dead; to prove that the Holocaust was real to doubters; and to educate younger generations about the dangers of intolerance and hate, so the Holocaust won't be repeated; and

WHEREAS, we owe Mrs. Mira Kimmelman a great debt for her courage and fortitude in sharing her Holocaust experiences to combat hate and bigotry today; we would all do well to heed her sage advice: "We all belong to the same race, the human race. Grow up with tolerance and respect for every human being."; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor Mira Kimmelman on her life of purpose and commitment, commend her ongoing commitment to inspiring and influencing young people through her story of suffering and salvation, and pledge to combat hate and intolerance in our daily lives to honor the memory of the eleven million people who were murdered during the Holocaust.

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