

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 894

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Thomas Guy Fortney, Jr., of Oak Ridge.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Thomas Guy Fortney, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Thomas Fortney was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a highly respected member of his community, Dr. Fortney served with acumen and alacrity as a prominent physician in Oak Ridge for many years, including tenures as Chief of Staff at Oak Ridge Hospital, Medical Director for the Oak Ridge K-25 Gaseous Diffusion Plant, and Regional Medical Director and Corporate Medical Director of Union Carbide; and

WHEREAS, born on July 11, 1924, in Harlan, Kentucky, Thomas Guy Fortney, Jr., was a graduate of Harlan City High School, where he played the clarinet and participated in the Boy Scouts of America, earning the rank of Eagle Scout; and

WHEREAS, after briefly attending Eastern Kentucky University upon his graduation from high school, Dr. Fortney entered the United States Army in July 1942 during World War II as part of America's Greatest Generation; and

WHEREAS, in the military, he trained as an x-ray technician and was sent to Europe as a combat medic with General George S. Patton's 4th Armored Division; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, Dr. Fortney participated in the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of the Ohrdruf and Buchenwald German concentration camps, which had a huge impact on his later life; and

WHEREAS, for his military service, he received a number of awards and commendations, including a Purple Heart and two Bronze Stars for heroic and meritorious conduct; and

WHEREAS, among his wartime and post-war exploits, Dr. Fortney had the privilege of "liberating" the Hennessey plant in Cognac, France, and riding Lipizzaner horses from Czechoslovakia to France; and

WHEREAS, upon returning to civilian life, Dr. Thomas Fortney obtained his medical degree at the University of Louisville Medical School and married the love of his life, Betty Ruth Gurley Fortney, on August 13, 1949; the young couple settled in Oak Ridge in 1952, and he established a private practice in general medicine; and

WHEREAS, after his retirement from the medical field, Dr. Fortney undertook his next life mission after a discussion with one of his grandchildren, who told him about a teacher at her school who said the Holocaust never happened; he went on to share what he had seen at the Ohrdruf concentration camp with her and made a presentation about the Holocaust to another grandchild's college class; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Thomas Fortney delivered his presentation at numerous high schools and universities, including the Holocaust Studies Conference at Middle Tennessee State University in 2015, to ensure that as many people as possible could hear his story and so no one would ever forget or deny what had happened; and

WHEREAS, a proud member of the American Legion, Dr. Fortney was a longtime member of First United Methodist Church of Oak Ridge, which he served faithfully for many years in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, devoted to his family, Dr. Fortney was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Betty Ruth Gurley Fortney; he is survived by his children and their spouses, Robert Douglas Fortney and Jerelynn Fortney, Thomas Guy Fortney III, Ruth Ellen Fortney Hafner and Joseph Hafner, Richard Lee Fortney and Ellen Fortney, and William Beck Fortney and Pamela Fortney; ten grandchildren; and nineteen great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, he was also preceded in death by his parents, Thomas Guy Fortney and Grace Douglas Fortney, and his brother, Ray Douglas Fortney; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Thomas Fortney leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his 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 TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. Thomas Guy Fortney, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his 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 Dr. Fortney.

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.