

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1470

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Howard Charles Tibbals,
formerly of Scott County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Howard Charles Tibbals, a former resident of Scott County who spent his retirement years in Sarasota, Florida; and

WHEREAS, Howard Tibbals was an industrial icon and important benefactor in Scott County, who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born in 1936 in Ohio, Mr. Tibbals was the son of Charles Ernest Tibbals, Jr., and Lillian Blanche Davidson Tibbals; he saw his first circus at the age of three and was so fascinated by the unloading of the wagons that he would sketch circus wagons during church; and

WHEREAS, in 1948, shortly after the Tibbals family moved to Oneida, Howard Tibbals was given a lathe and jigsaw for his twelfth birthday; he used the tools to begin building a replica circus—a ¾-inch-to-1-foot-scale replica of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, for which he later gained notoriety; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Tibbals began creating the circus's big top in 1956, built his first wagon in 1959, and completed most of his models by 1974; the circus premiered at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, and in 1986, it was exhibited again at the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C.; today, the circus occupies more than 2,000 square feet at the Ringling Estate in Sarasota, Florida, which is home to the expansive Tibbals Learning Center; and

WHEREAS, the Tibbals Learning Center opened in 2006 and was credited with helping transform the Ringling Estate into a family-friendly attraction; Mr. Tibbals donated an additional

\$4 million to add a two-story, 20,000-square-foot wing to the facility, which was completed and opened in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Howard Tibbals was best known in Scott County as the face of Tibbals Flooring Co., the hardwood flooring manufacturer founded by his father and uncle and the maker of Hartco, an innovative brand of parquet flooring patented by his father in the late 1950s by using pieces of wood that had previously been considered worthless; and

WHEREAS, known in Scott County as simply "Tibbals" or "Hartco," the original wood flooring plant expanded to become the county's largest industrial employer, a title it held for many decades; at its peak, Tibbals employed more than 520 individuals and infused more than \$30 million annually into the local economy; and

WHEREAS, it was once said that, thanks to Tibbals, there are "pieces of Scott County all over the world"; when future U.S. President Donald Trump built the Trump Tower in New York City, he selected Hartco flooring, manufactured in Oneida, for part of the building; and

WHEREAS, Howard Tibbals joined his father at the company as soon as he was old enough, working beside him and ultimately taking over operations completely; in 1988, he sold the Hartco brand to Premark International, with operations in Oneida continuing to some extent for thirty-two years; and

WHEREAS, following the sale of his company, Mr. Tibbals became a major benefactor of the Oneida Special School District, contributing millions of dollars when its facilities were in a serious state of disrepair, making the school system's new state-of-the art campuses a reality in the 1990s and thus playing a large part in saving the school district; and

WHEREAS, from his childhood until his retirement years, Howard Tibbals spent two to three hours each day working with wood, plastic, and cloth to construct the various pieces of his replica circus; throughout his lifetime, he handcrafted more than one million pieces; and

WHEREAS, he was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, left to cherish his memory are his beloved wife of thirty years, Janice; children, David (Karen) Tibbals, Jeff (Melodye) Tibbals, Tim (Dawn) Tibbals, Tracey (Don) Stansberry, Glenda (Chris) Gray, Barry (Stacey) Elkins, Betsy (Peter) Farrell, and Barsha Saliba; sixteen grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and many extended family members and special friends; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, Mr. Tibbals was preceded in death by his infant brother, Charles; sister, Susan Tibbals Carson; and daughter, Karen Tibbals Reed; and

WHEREAS, Howard Tibbals leaves behind an enduring 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 we should 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 Howard Charles Tibbals, 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 Mr. Tibbals.

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.