

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 8001

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Cornelia A. "Connie" Clark.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Cornelia A. "Connie" Clark; and

WHEREAS, Justice Clark was a dedicated and highly respected jurist who leaves an indelible legacy of service to the people of this State; and

WHEREAS, an eighth-generation Williamson Countian, Justice Connie Clark was born in Franklin on September 15, 1950; and

WHEREAS, Justice Clark attended public schools in Franklin and graduated from high school in Atlanta, Georgia, before earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Vanderbilt University in 1971; and

WHEREAS, she obtained a Master of Arts in Teaching from Harvard University in 1972 and taught high school history and government for four years in Georgia before returning to Nashville to attend law school; and

WHEREAS, in 1979, Justice Connie Clark received her Juris Doctorate from Vanderbilt University School of Law, where she served as a member of the *Vanderbilt Law Review*; and

WHEREAS, upon her graduation, Justice Clark joined the law firm of Farris, Warfield, and Kanaday, now known as Stites and Harbison; during this time, one of her primary clients was the City of Franklin, for which she served as city attorney; and

WHEREAS, Justice Clark's appointment in 1989 as Circuit Judge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District by Governor Ned McWherter was a historic moment for Williamson, Lewis, Perry, and Hickman counties, as she was the first woman to be seated to the court; her tenure included two successful elections in 1990 and 1998; and

WHEREAS, from 1999 to 2005, she served as Administrative Director of the Tennessee Courts, in which capacity she utilized her keen intellect and extensive knowledge of State government to champion improvements to the court system throughout the State; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her distinguished judicial career, Justice Connie Clark was appointed to the Tennessee Supreme Court by Governor Phil Bredesen in September 2005; she was elected to full eight-year terms in 2006 and 2014; and

WHEREAS, Justice Clark served as Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court from 2010 to 2012, becoming only the second woman in Tennessee history to serve in that role; and

WHEREAS, Justice Connie Clark was a lifelong member of First United Methodist Church in Franklin, where she had served as lay leader; member of the Board of Trustees; and chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee, Administrative Council, and the Site Selection and Building Committee; she also served as board chair of the United Methodist Publishing House and was a trustee of Martin Methodist College; and

WHEREAS, as an active member of her community, Justice Clark was a past president of YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee; a former board member of Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee, Inc., Williamson County-Franklin Chamber of Commerce, and Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County; and co-chair of the original Steering Committee of Franklin Tomorrow, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Tennessee Bar Association bestowed upon her the highest award for service to the judiciary, The Drowota Award; the Lawyers Association for Women, Marion Griffin Chapter, presented Justice Clark with the Justice Martha Craig Daughtrey Award in 2017; the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Service gave her the Janice M. Holder Award in 2020; and in 2015, she received the Pioneer Award by Vision 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Williamson County Bar Association presented her with its inaugural Liberty Bell Award, and in 2010, Justice Clark was inducted into the YWCA Academy for Women of Achievement; and

WHEREAS, described by Governor Bill Lee as "a fierce advocate for justice and a trailblazer for women in the legal profession," Justice Clark 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 remember this exceptional attorney, judge, justice, 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 Tennessee Supreme Court Justice Cornelia A. "Connie" Clark, 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 Justice Clark.

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.