

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 687

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Johnny Hayes of Sideview, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Johnny Hayes, a political giant at both the state and national levels and one of this nation's premier campaign fundraisers; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hayes was deeply committed to politics and its ability to change people's lives for the better, and he worked with purpose and conviction to elect candidates in whom he believed; and

WHEREAS, he was instrumental in launching the political career of Al Gore and in many of the triumphs that Vice President Gore enjoyed during his tenure in elected office; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Hayes served as Al Gore's Finance Chairman during his first campaign for the United States Congress in 1976, and filled that same role in every subsequent Gore race, including his masterful service as National Finance Chairman for the 2000 Gore presidential campaign; and

WHEREAS, a close political ally of Governor Bredesen, Mr. Hayes served as Finance Chairman for Phil Bredesen's 2002 gubernatorial campaign victory, and performed the same function in 2006, when he helped engineer Governor Bredesen's historic ninety-five county sweep; and

WHEREAS, more than being the top fundraiser for both Vice President Gore and Governor Bredesen, Johnny Hayes served as the patriarch of these campaigns and made it his business to take care of their staffers as if they were his own family and to let them know their work was appreciated; and

WHEREAS, he demonstrated his effective public-sector leadership as a member of Governor Ned McWherter's cabinet beginning in 1991, serving as Commissioner of Employment Security; and

WHEREAS, he later served as Commissioner of Economic and Community Development under Governor McWherter, in which position he further developed his skills in creating greater opportunity for people; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, President Bill Clinton nominated Johnny Hayes to serve on the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority, where he helped strengthen the Authority's relationships in the seven-state region, many times through the sheer force of his personality; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hayes's unprecedented success in the political, public service, and business arenas was directly attributable to his irrepressible optimism, good-natured style, and a keen ability to offer simple, common-sense guidance on challenging problems; and

WHEREAS, most of all, he was a man of the people who was always willing to help a friend, or even a stranger, in need; and

WHEREAS, on any given day, Mr. Hayes might be sought out by some of the most powerful people in the nation or some of the most oppressed members of his community; both the weak and the strong knew they could count on Johnny Hayes for help, and that he would always do his best; and

WHEREAS, he possessed a loyal following among his friends and admirers, because of his ability to connect with people from all walks of life and develop lasting relationships with them; and

WHEREAS, his laugh and his smile were infectious, and his word was his bond: if Johnny Hayes vouched for a person, there was no question about that person's ethics or loyalty; and

WHEREAS, a voice of reason in the often acrimonious national debate on immigration policy, Mr. Hayes was given the American Dream Award by the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition for his support of initiatives dedicated to making Tennessee "a more welcoming and hospitable place"; and

WHEREAS, a native of Alcoa, Tennessee, Johnny Hayes was the son of Harold and Elizabeth Hayes and the brother of Steve Hayes and Libby Breeding; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Tennessee Technological University in 1961, Mr. Hayes moved to Hendersonville, where he founded the independent insurance agency, Newman, Hayes & Hogan, later Newman, Hayes & Dixon, which grew into one of the most successful agencies in the area before he sold his interest in 1989; and

WHEREAS, residing in the beautiful Sideview community in Sumner County, he also operated a livestock farm where he bred and raised Grand Champion Red Angus cattle; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hayes expressed his devout faith as a member of Bethpage United Methodist Church where he served on the Administrative Board and as Sunday School Superintendent for eighteen years; he often used his singular fundraising abilities to benefit worthwhile projects and causes sponsored by the church; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed collecting political memorabilia, and over the course of four decades, he had assembled one of the most impressive collections in the nation, which included a copper button from George Washington's inauguration and countless other rare political treasures; and

WHEREAS, Johnny Hayes greatly cherished his political and business relationships, but his heart lay with his real family, which was the foundation of his life; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his siblings, Mr. Hayes is survived by his loving wife, Mary Howard Reese Hayes, who was his strength and inspiration; his children, of whom he was very proud, Craig Hayes, Amy Hayes, and Mary Kate Mouser; and his precious grandchildren, Austin Hayes, Ashley Hayes, and Miller Mouser; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should remember this gifted businessman, consummate campaigner, and peerless public servant; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory and celebrate the bountiful life of Johnny Hayes, a gallant gentleman and beloved political patriarch who was equally comfortable with paupers and princes, reflecting fondly upon his indelible legacy of public service performed with proficiency

and integrity and his great compassion for his fellow human beings. We express our sympathy and extend our condolences to Mr. Hayes's family and many friends.

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