

A RESOLUTION adjourning the Senate in honor and loving memory of Senator Wendell Hampton Ford.

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford was a native son of this Commonwealth born in Owensboro on September 8, 1924, the son of the late Ernest M. and Irene Schenk Ford; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford proudly served his country as a member of the United States Army during World War II and as a member of the Kentucky National Guard; and

WHEREAS, upon his return to Owensboro after his military service, Wendell Ford joined the Jaycees, ascending to become Kentucky's first national Jaycees president and international vice president; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford's political career began in 1959 when he joined Governor Bert Combs's administration as Chief Assistant to the Governor; and

WHEREAS, in 1965, Wendell Ford, like his father before him, was elected to the Kentucky State Senate, where he served before becoming Lieutenant Governor under Governor Louie B. Nunn in 1967; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford was elected the 49th Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 1971, and in that capacity presided over an unprecedented reorganization of state government that streamlined 60 to 70 agencies into nine departments that reported to the Governor; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford's administration made education a chief priority through increased funding and strengthening of the Council on Higher Education; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford spearheaded the initiative to help the poorest Kentuckians by removing the sales tax on food; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, Wendell Ford called the General Assembly into special session in order to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution, making Kentucky one of the first states to do so; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford was elected to the United States Senate in 1974, and for

the next 24 years served the nation and this Commonwealth with integrity, compassion, and an indomitable spirit that made him one of the finest statesmen Kentucky has ever produced; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the United States Senate, Wendell Ford was a fierce advocate for the working men and women of Kentucky, defending the welfare of Kentucky tobacco farmers and coal miners; and

WHEREAS, as chairman of the Commerce Committee's Aviation Subcommittee, Wendell Ford made a concerted effort to build and improve airports in the nation and Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford's belief in the importance of access to the political process led him to sponsor the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, known as the "Motor-Voter" Act; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford lent his tireless effort and hard work to the passage of important legislation such as the Family and Medical Leave Act, the National Energy Security Act of 1992, the Age Discrimination Act Amendments of 1986, the Tobacco Reform Act of 1985, and the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1977; and

WHEREAS, his colleagues in the Senate selected Wendell Ford to serve as the Majority Whip from 1991 to 1995 and as the Democratic Whip from 1995 to 1999; and

WHEREAS, despite his dedication to his party, Wendell Ford was known as a lawmaker who was not afraid to reach across the aisle to his Republican colleagues while working toward compromise; and

WHEREAS, upon his departure from the United States Senate, one of Wendell Ford's Republican colleagues recalled their "fierce differences of opinion which have always been resolved at the end of the day with a smile and a handshake"; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford was known as "Mr. Democrat," spending six years as the chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and working until his death to support his party's candidates and hone its message; and

WHEREAS, after his retirement from the Senate, Wendell Ford remained devoted to educating the youth of Kentucky, founding the Wendell H. Ford Government Education Center at the Owensboro Museum of Science and History, and serving on the advisory committee as an instructor at the University of Kentucky's Martin School of Public Policy and Administration; and

WHEREAS, with deepest respect and admiration, this Honorable Body pays tribute to Senator Wendell Hampton Ford, who passed from this earthly life on January 22, 2015; and

WHEREAS, this body pauses to acknowledge the celebrated accomplishments of the Senator, including all that he has done for this Commonwealth, for this chamber, and for the generation of lawmakers who have attempted to follow in his stead; and

WHEREAS, Wendell Ford is survived by his wife, the former Ruby Jean Neel, whom he married September 18, 1942; his children, Shirley Dexter and her husband, Bill, and Steven M. Ford and his wife, Sarah; his grandchildren, Emily Anne Pendleton and her husband, Reed, Betsy Dexter, Wendell Clay H. Ford and his wife, Diane, Steven Neel Ford and his wife, Sarah, and Morgan Ratliff Ford; his great-grandchildren, Whitley Hampton Ford, Wendell John Clay Ford, Sutton Elizabeth Ford, and Wynn Williams Ford; his sister, Betty J. Sharpe; and his brother, Reyburn W. Ford and his wife, Dot;

NOW, THEREFORE,

***Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

➔Section 1. The Senate hereby expresses its deepest and most sincere condolences upon the passing of Senator Wendell Hampton Ford, the "Country Boy from Yellow Creek," and extends its heartfelt sympathy to his family, friends, and all those Kentuckians whose lives he touched.

➔Section 2. The Senate sends special condolences to the people of Owensboro, who are grieving the loss of one of their special sons on this day.

➔Section 3. When the Senate adjourns this day, it does so in honor, loving memory, and eternal gratitude to Senator Wendell Hampton Ford.

➔Section 4. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Senator Joe Bowen for delivery.