

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 257

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A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Nelson Gray of Mountain City.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Nelson Gray; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray 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, born in Hansonville, Virginia, on April 28, 1927, Nelson Gray graduated from Lebanon High School, attended William & Mary College, and received his degree from Milligan College. He proudly served in the United States Navy and continued his service in the Navy Reserve for eight years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray began his professional career in Bristol with National Cash Register. In 1953, he and his family moved to Mountain City, where he partnered with Joe Blackburn to operate Blackburn's Supermarket; he later became the sole owner and continued to manage the supermarket until 1979, when he sold the business to Food Country USA; and

WHEREAS, a successful entrepreneur, Nelson Gray owned and supervised the Quick Shop and the Quick Wash Laundromat for many years; and

WHEREAS, throughout his business career, he served as a landlord for numerous organizations and businesses, including the Department of Human Services, Okay Beauty Shop, Miller Woods Furniture, Rite Aid, AutoZone, Hometown Salvage Grocery, McDonald's, and Parsons' Quick Shop; and

WHEREAS, Nelson Gray was an active and devout member of the First United Methodist Church of Mountain City, where he served faithfully for many years; and

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

WHEREAS, a dedicated family man, he was preceded in death by his parents, Nelson Gray Sr. and Patty Hargis Gray; his wife of fifty-four years, Doris Wilson White Gray; his sisters, Elizabeth Jane (Bess) Hargis and Mary Armstrong; and special friend and cousin, Jerry A. Jessee; and

WHEREAS, his memory will be cherished by his daughters, Nancy Elizabeth (Ron) Drake, Susan Doris (Alan) Giles, and Eula Patty (Jerry) Smith; his eight grandchildren, Ron "Buddy" Drake, Elizabeth Leigh Drake Sonneborn, Wesley Alan Giles, Sarah Elizabeth Smith, Grady Nelson Smith, Debra Ann Drake, Vicki Drake Sanford, and Laura Smith; and his seven great-grandchildren, Payton Anne Drake, Eleanor Wilson Drake, Grayson Drake, Abram Sonneborn, Seth Drake Sonneborn, Emily Sanford, and Ashley Sanford; and

WHEREAS, he will be sorely missed but fondly remembered by his nephews, Charles Hargis, Joel Jessee, and James Nelson Jessee; his nieces, Patricia Armstrong, Jean Maggard, and Gayle Jessee Artrip; and numerous cousins, great-nieces, and great-nephews, along with a host of friends; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray 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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Nelson Gray, 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. Gray.

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