

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1063
By Rinks

A RESOLUTION to recognize Representative Don Ridgeway for his unparalleled service as a member of the General Assembly.

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that the members of this Body should honor those fellow legislators who have performed their elected duties with the utmost integrity and singular devotion, and whose efforts to ensure competent and efficient public service have brought immeasurable benefits to their respective communities, and to this great State; and

WHEREAS, Representative Don Ridgeway of Paris is one such distinguished public servant, whose illustrious career in the House of Representatives will come to an end at the adjournment sine die of the 2002 Session of the 102nd General Assembly, as he has announced his retirement from this Body; and

WHEREAS, born and raised in Paris to the late John T. and Lillie Ruth Ridgeway, Don received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Education and his Master's Degree in Education Administration and Supervision from the University of Tennessee at Martin; and

WHEREAS, he has been a popular and highly influential figure in the political and civic lives of Paris and Henry County for 18 years, and has admirably served his constituents of the 75th House District in numerous capacities, always working diligently and effectively at his elected duties; and

WHEREAS, during his 18 years in the House of Representatives in which he represented the good people of Henry, Houston, Stewart, Benton and parts of Carroll and Dickson Counties, Don has been respected in Nashville as a dedicated and well-informed legislator who has always voted his conscience, with the best interests of the people of Tennessee and of his District in mind; and

WHEREAS, Representative Ridgeway has been a dynamic participant in the legislative process and has earned the universal admiration of his colleagues for his outstanding contributions and his service as a member and Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, as a member and Secretary of the House Finance Ways & Means Committee, as a member and Chairman of the House Conservation and Environment Committee; and

WHEREAS, he has adroitly represented his party as Majority Caucus Chairman during the 97th, 98th and 99th General Assemblies, as Treasurer for the House Democratic Caucus, the Joint House/Senate Democratic Caucus for the 95th and 96th General Assemblies, and the Rural West Tennessee House Democratic Caucus; and

WHEREAS, Don Ridgeway's word is his bond, and he is respected by his constituents and peers alike for the conviction and proficient manner in which he has discharged his duties; he was appointed by Speaker Jimmy Naifeh to serve as Redistricting Chairman for the 1990 redistricting cycle, and to serve on the Select Committee on Children and Youth for the 100th, 101st and 102nd General Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, he is a well-informed proponent of this state's transportation needs, in addition to conservation and environment concerns, particularly our state parks; and

WHEREAS, Representative Ridgeway chaired a study and sponsored legislation to establish the Odometer Fraud Investigation Unit within the Department of Safety; he was also a tireless advocate of ethics and campaign reform, and was the prime sponsor of legislation to create the Registry of Election Finance; and

WHEREAS, he understands the connection between quality education and success in adult life, and has worked with purpose and commitment in support of funding for education initiatives and improvements; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman who truly appreciates the responsibilities, as well as the privileges, of leadership, Don Ridgeway has served as a member of many community and civic organizations, including the University of Tennessee National Alumni Board of Governors, the Elks, the Masons, the Shriners, the Country Music Association, as a former Chairman of the Henry County Board of Education, and the Henry County Democratic Party, and as former President of the University of Tennessee at Martin Alumni Association; and

WHEREAS, for his unparalleled devotion to public service, Representative Ridgeway has received the Paris-Henry County Senior Citizens' "Distinguished and Devoted Service Award," the Henry County 4-H's "1994 Friend of 4-H Award," and the American Red Cross's "1995 American Red Cross Extraordinary Personal Action Certificate of Recognition"; and

WHEREAS, as a further testament to the honesty, integrity and overall exemplary character and devotion with which Don Ridgeway has dispensed of his duties as a servant of the people, he is a three-time recipient of the "Legislator of the Year Award," given by the Tennessee Association of Human Resource Agencies in 1996, the Tennessee Development Districts-Northwest Development District in 2000, and the Tennessee Development Districts-Greater Nashville Regional Council in 2001; and

WHEREAS, his many achievements aside, Don is most grateful of the love and support he shares with his wife, Mary Kate Penn Ridgeway, and their son, John Penn Ridgeway; and

WHEREAS, Representative Ridgeway's announcement of his retirement from the General Assembly leaves a void that will not easily be filled, and his considerable talent will be dearly missed by the citizens of the 75th House District and the members of his legislative staff; and

WHEREAS, this Body finds it appropriate, yet difficult, to bid farewell to our highly respected friend and colleague, Don Ridgeway, whose political presence will continue to be felt on Capitol Hill for many years to come; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we hereby honor Representative Don Ridgeway on his meritorious service to Tennessee as a member of the General Assembly, and commend him for his countless contributions and many good works in service of the citizens of the 75th House District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we extend to Don our best wishes for much success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Representative Ridgeway as a token of our esteem, with this final resolving clause deleted from such copy.