

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 816
By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. George Bela Kehler
of Johnson City.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of
the death of Dr. George Bela Kehler; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kehler was an exemplary citizen and consummate professional who
worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow Tennesseans in numerous
capacities; and

WHEREAS, a native of Szodliget, Hungary, he was the son of the late Bela and Ilona
Dombay Kehler; and

WHEREAS, he was one of Johnson City's most distinguished citizens, having lived in his
adopted home city since 1959; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kehler served with acumen and alacrity from 1959-1989 as a Professor
of Music at East Tennessee State University, in which position he earned the respect of his
peers and students alike for the exemplary quality of his skill and instruction; and

WHEREAS, he donated his professional papers to the ETSU archives in 2001; and

WHEREAS, a concert pianist, he had previously taught at Bethany College, Illinois
Wesleyan University, and Kilgore College; and

WHEREAS, one of the academy's leading musicians, George Bela Kehler earned doctoral degrees from the Royal Hungarian Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, Hungary and from the Mozarteum Academy in Salzburg, Austria; he also earned a law degree from the University of Budapest; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kehler refined his immense talent while studying under famed pianists, including Erno Daniel, Zoltan Kodaly, Edwin Fischer, and Wilhelm Kempff; and

WHEREAS, he was a breathtaking pianist and performed with the Budapest Symphony Orchestra and the Mozarteum Orchestra of Salzburg; he presented yearly recitals in New York City at Carnegie Recital Hall and Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium for thirty years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kehler also presented recitals at London's Wigmore Hall, Berlin's Beethoven Saal, and Vienna's Cultural Institute and gave more than fifty solo piano recitals in Johnson City; and

WHEREAS, known throughout the musical community for his unsurpassed ability, Dr. Kehler was a recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities grant in musicology in 1976; and

WHEREAS, his two-volume reference work, *The Piano in Concert*, was published in 1982 by Scarecrow Press and is used by the music libraries at such elite institutions as Juilliard, Harvard, and the British Museum; and

WHEREAS, this distinguished Tennessean was listed on the roster of Steinway Piano Artists and in the *International Who's Who in Music*; and

WHEREAS, a member of Phi Kappa Phi and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, he served as a judge for the National Guild of Piano Teachers; and

WHEREAS, a devout Lutheran, he attended the Munsey Memorial United Methodist Church, where he was a beloved inspiration to many; and

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

WHEREAS, he cherished the loving companionship of Mrs. Rachel Eatherly Kehler and was the proud father of George Bela Kehler II; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by one sister, Ilona Dombay; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kehler 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, for more than four decades, he brought tremendous honor to Tennessee and served as an exceptional ambassador for this State, and it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this extraordinary human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Dr. George Bela Kehler, 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 Dr. Kehler.

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