

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 20
By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Herman Postma of Oak Ridge.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Herman Postma; and

WHEREAS, Herman Postma 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, Herman Postma served with acumen and alacrity for many years as Director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, in which position he earned international acclaim and the respect of his peers and superiors alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, a native of Wilmington, North Carolina, Herman Postma attended Duke University and earned graduate degrees from Harvard University in 1959; upon his graduation from Harvard, he joined the staff of Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) having previously spent the summers of 1954 to 1957 working in ORNL's Electronuclear and Physics divisions; and

WHEREAS, an accomplished scientist, Herman Postma was an internationally recognized expert in the field of plasma physics and was credited with developing neutral beam injection and stochastic heating methods to heat plasma devices and with devising solutions to plasma stability problems standing in the way of achieving fusion goals; he served as a visiting scientist in the Netherlands at the Dutch Institute for plasma physics for a year; and

WHEREAS, in 1974 at the age of 40, Herman Postma was named Director of ORNL, the first person to hold the position who did not work on the Manhattan Project. His background in fusion energy rather than fission energy coincided with the creation of the Energy Research and Development Administration and a new direction for the work of ORNL; and

WHEREAS, during his 14 year tenure, Dr. Postma applied professional management techniques to ORNL administration, presided over broad program expansions and changing governmental agency control, culminating in the Department of Energy, while working to assist technology transfer to American industry and forge strong working ties to regional institutions like the University of Tennessee through the Distinguished Scientist program; and

WHEREAS, highly respected and greatly admired for his wisdom and expertise, in 1988 Dr. Postma was named Senior Vice President for Martin Marietta Energy Systems and would retire from this post in 1992; and

WHEREAS, Herman Postma was an advocate for developing businesses, serving as a mentor and advisor to a number of start-up endeavors in Oak Ridge. He was a founding member and later Chairman of the East Tennessee Economic Council, started the technology transfer group at ORNL and chaired the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, an ardent supporter for quality education, Herman Postma was a member of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission from 1984 to 1992, served on the advisory committee of the University of Tennessee College of Business and, along with his wife, served as a fundraising co-chair of the Oak Ridge Education Foundation's project to raise money to build a new Oak Ridge High School; and

WHEREAS, a Duke Blue Devil through and through, Dr. Postma was especially proud of being a graduate of Duke University, along with his wife and two children, and was honored to serve as a member of the Duke University Board of Trustees from 1987 to 1999; and

WHEREAS, a citizen of the world, Herman Postma had a passion for travel and gave of his time and considerable talent to help bring the world to Oak Ridge through several initiatives including the Oak Ridge Sister City Support Organization, which he helped found, and the establishment of the International Friendship Bell in A.K. Bissell Park, an effort he spearheaded with Dr. Alvin Weinberg and Shigeko Uppuluri; and

WHEREAS, his far flung travels included exchange programs with Obninsk, Russia and Naka, Japan and a group extended study in South Africa for Rotary International that he led after his retirement from Martin Marietta in 1992; and

WHEREAS, diagnosed with a rare form of muscular dystrophy, Dr. Postma's interest in learning and teaching continued as he tracked the latest medical research to share with his doctors and medical researchers looking for a cure; and

WHEREAS, despite his disabilities, Herman Postma forged once again into the cutting edge of technology by becoming one of the first persons in America to own a Segway personal mobility device; he traveled the halls of the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. on his Segway before testifying on national laboratory reform in front of a U.S. Senate Committee; and

WHEREAS, a valued friend and neighbor, Dr. Postma was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife Pat and was the proud parent of son, Peter Postma; daughter-in-law, Jeannette; daughter, Pamela; son-in-law, Phillip Khinda; and doting grandfather of beloved grandchildren, Matthew and Tommy Khinda; and

WHEREAS, Herman Postma 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 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 SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Herman Postma, 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. Postma.

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