

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 415

By Richardson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Victor Zager.

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

WHEREAS, Mr. Zager 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, as an attorney, Mr. Zager utilized his skills and acumen on the behalf of countless clients; as an industrialist, he helped to advance the methods of textile design and production for the benefit of his country's military men and women; and as a journalist, he strove to keep the people of East Tennessee informed and engaged; and

WHEREAS, born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 6, 1929, Victor Zager, his sister, Trudy Zager Seidman, and his brother, Stanley Zager, were first-generation Americans; their parents, Rebecca Ringelescu and Morris Zager, had emigrated to the United States from Eastern Europe around the turn of the twentieth century, passing through Ellis Island on their way to a new life in the teeming metropolis of New York City; and

WHEREAS, Morris Zager had left behind a large family in Białystok, Poland, which was occupied by the German Schutzstaffel (SS) in 1943; and

WHEREAS, his father's distress over the fate of his own family would leave an indelible impression on the young Victor Zager; and

WHEREAS, after the Communist government of Poland began to allow western visitors into the country, Victor Zager traveled to Białystok in search of any remaining family members; he found no record of any that might have survived, and estimated that as many as thirty-five of his father's relatives perished in the northeastern Polish city during the Nazi occupation; and

WHEREAS, in his own hometown of Brooklyn, Victor Zager flourished; after graduating from Tilden High School, he attended Queens College, from which he earned a Bachelor of Science degree; and

WHEREAS, he continued his education at New York University, earning a Master of Education there; he received his Juris Doctor degree from Brooklyn Law School; and

WHEREAS, during the Korean War, Mr. Zager answered his country's call to duty, rendering sterling service as a member of the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, admitted to the New York State Bar in 1952, Victor Zager served as Chief Legal Counsel to Industrial Coated Products of America (INCOPA) early in his legal career; Mr. Zager eventually became a business partner to the firm's founder, Allan Mann; and

WHEREAS, by the 1960s, INCOPA and its controlling partners were enjoying considerable success, and Mr. Zager and Mr. Mann began searching for a location for a new industrial plant; the two settled on Bristol, Tennessee, where their new plant employed approximately fifty Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, INCOPA sold its Bristol plant to Koracorp, a public corporation that continued factory operations until the company was bought by Levi Strauss and Company; and

WHEREAS, Seaman Corporation purchased the plant in 1979, and Victor Zager began serving as a consultant to the company as soon as it acquired the Bristol facility; Mr. Zager worked for Seaman until his death; and

WHEREAS, with years of experience in the textile business, Mr. Zager was instrumental to Seaman's operations; he was involved in the development, production, and sale of textile products that are essential to the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and domestic law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Zager was considered a national expert in his field; he frequently educated military planners on the uses of cutting-edge textile technology, which is in evidence on battlefields all over the world today; and

WHEREAS, throughout his secular pursuits, Victor Zager was strengthened and supported by the friendships and sense of heritage he developed as an active member of the world's Jewish community; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Zager served as President of the B'nai Shalom Congregation in Blountville from 1979 to 1980; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Zager also served as President of several synagogues across the United States, and he has been President of the New York Metropolitan Region of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, from which he administered over six hundred synagogues; and

WHEREAS, as Director of the World Council of Synagogues, Mr. Zager coordinated an international meeting of twenty conservative Jewish organizations in Jerusalem in 1970; as a part of his official duties at the gathering, he moderated a press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir; and

WHEREAS, a citizen of the world, Victor Zager sought to share that world with his East Tennessee neighbors through the newspapers he owned in the area; he was part owner of Highlands Publications, Incorporated, and with his wife, Muriel Zager, he syndicated newspaper columns and editorials for the *Bristol Herald Courier*, as well as other state, national, and international publications. The Zagers also owned and published the *Washington County News* in Abingdon, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, during the last thirty years of his life, Victor Zager was credentialed as a foreign press correspondent, and he and his wife traveled across the world pursuing stories on Middle Eastern politics, history, and current affairs; together they published numerous articles, editorials, and books, both fiction and non-fiction; and

WHEREAS, a generous philanthropist, Mr. Zager served as a trustee for the estate of Erna Kaldeg and used the fee he received for his legal services to endow a Diversity Lectureship at East Tennessee State University in her memory; he also endowed a Holocaust Study Chair at Emory and Henry University in memory of his father; and

WHEREAS, he also underwrote the quilting efforts of several Bristol senior citizens; his support allowed them to preserve their craft and create hundreds of blankets and comforters; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Victor Zager received the Thirty-Year Distinguished Service Award from the Tennessee Bar Association in 2006; and

WHEREAS, Victor Zager 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 of over fifty-six years, Muriel Kagan Zager, and was the proud father of three children, David Thomas Zager, Lynne Donna Zager, and Susan Kagan Zager; in addition to his wife and three children, Mr. Zager is survived by eleven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Victor Zager 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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Victor Zager, 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. Zager.

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