

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 762

By Fincher

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Keith Bilbrey on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, throughout its illustrious history, Tennessee has been blessed with many exemplary citizens who have made significant contributions to the field of country music; and

WHEREAS, Keith Bilbrey is one such estimable person who has dedicated his outstanding abilities and his more than forty years in broadcasting to our State's rich musical heritage; and

WHEREAS, born in Cookeville to Leo and Ethel Bilbrey, Keith Bilbrey obtained his broadcast license at the age of fourteen and went to work for Cookeville station WHUB when he was sixteen; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, Mr. Bilbrey moved to Nashville and began his distinguished tenure with WSM radio, first as a substitute announcer for WSM-FM and then as a full-time disc jockey on WSM's FM and AM stations, where he quickly became a fan favorite; and

WHEREAS, joining a long tradition of legendary broadcasters, Mr. Bilbrey began announcing on the Grand Ole Opry in 1982; he also hosted the television show *Grand Ole Opry Live*, as well as its warm-up show, *Backstage Live*, when it aired from 1985 to 2000; and

WHEREAS, renowned for his sonorous vocal delivery, Keith Bilbrey has lent his voice to many of country music's television and radio shows, including *Ernest Tubb's Midnight Jamboree*, the telecast of the *Country Music Association (CMA) Awards*, the CMA's thirty-fifth anniversary special, the *TNN/Music City News Awards*, *An Evening of Country Greats*, *Honky-Tonkin' at the Wildhorse*, and the American Federation of Musician's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary show; he also appeared on the A&E biographies of Buck Owens and Ronnie Milsap as a historian; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his esteemed career in country music, Mr. Bilbrey was an on-air personality for Nashville NBC affiliate WSMV for twenty-four years, serving the majority of

this time as the weatherman on the nation's top-rated local morning show, *The Ralph Emery Show*; and

WHEREAS, beloved by country stars and fans alike, Mr. Bilbrey was honored the night he announced his last show at the Grand Ole Opry, having songs dedicated to him by the performers and being called to the stage by Opry veteran Marty Stuart for a standing ovation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bilbrey continues to lend his talents to a syndicated radio show, *Classic Country Today*, as well as a television show, *Larry's Country Diner*; and

WHEREAS, Keith Bilbrey exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Mr. Bilbrey has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues; 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 extend to Keith Bilbrey our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, congratulate him upon forty years of broadcasting excellence, and thank him for a lifetime of dedication to Nashville media, countless grateful performers and fans, and the rich musical heritage of Tennessee.

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