

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 479

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Roswell Rhea Browder of Roane County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Roswell Rhea Browder on September 12, 2011; and

WHEREAS, Roswell Rhea Browder was an exemplary public servant and highly successful businessman who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, having deep familial roots in east Tennessee, Mr. Browder, born December 2, 1913, was the descendant of three pioneering families, the Browders, the Byrds, and the Gallahers. He was the lone surviving child of nine children born to the late William Hamilton and Margaret Mae Billingsly Browder; and

WHEREAS, owners of land in the Wheat Community of Roane County, the Browder family sold property to the United States government during the years of World War II that was used for the top-secret Manhattan Project that built the world's first atomic bomb. Roswell Browder, a member of the United States Coast Guard, was on his way to Europe to serve in the War, when the atomic bombs were dropped and ended the War; and

WHEREAS, during the 1930s, Mr. Browder along with two of his brothers, Joe and Ed, founded Harriman Oil Company, which was at one time the largest Shell oil distributor in Tennessee. Their Vermont Gateway Shell Station in Oak Ridge was once featured on the cover of *Look* magazine, distinguished for selling more gasoline per day than any other gasoline station in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Browder brothers later launched a chain of convenience stores, Rocky Top Markets, which today includes more than forty stores and is a major employer in the region; and

WHEREAS, other successful business ventures to the Browder brothers' credit include East Tennessee Motor Company in Knoxville and Harriman, East Tennessee Truck in Knoxville, and Central Florida Oil Company in Ocala, Florida; and

WHEREAS, a man of great industry, Mr. Browder was also a man of leisure who greatly enjoyed the outdoors. A devout sportsman and an avid boater, he had the distinct honor of being the only person to serve three terms on the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission by appointments of Governor Buford Ellington and Governor Ned Ray McWherter; and

WHEREAS, a part of his legacy to the State was his formative work developing the 53,000-acre Royal Blue Wildlife Management Area which lies in Campbell and Scott counties. Mr. Browder was a member of the Fort Loudon Yacht Club, and he was a long-time member of the Tennessee Boating Safety Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, ever valuing his opportunities to be in fellowship with the members of his community, Mr. Browder was a long-time member of the Presbyterian Church. He was also a Shriner and a Mason; and

WHEREAS, though his life was long and fruitful, he will be greatly missed by his loving children and in-laws. Mr. Browder is survived by three daughters, Dorothy Jane Browder, Debra Browder Rutledge and husband, David, and Carol Ann Browder Wheeler and husband, Ed; three sons, William Rhea Browder and wife, Debbie, Edward Carmack Browder, and Christopher Rhea Browder; and two granddaughters, Brittany Rhea Browder and Juli Alison Browder; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Browder will be greatly missed by his dear friend Dorothy, his loving caregivers, and a host of other family and friends; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Browder 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; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Roswell Rhea Browder, 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. Browder.

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