

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 919

By Herron

A RESOLUTION to recognize Josephine Binkley on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those public servants who have performed with uncommon devotion and excellence throughout their years of industry; and

WHEREAS, Josephine Binkley is an extraordinary person who served with distinction for thirty-five years in various capacities within State government; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley began working for the State of Tennessee on January 25, 1977, as an employee of the Department of General Services, and within the year she assumed a position within the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, on June 1, 1987, Ms. Binkley transferred to the General Assembly where she started as administrative assistant to Representatives Harold Holt and Roy Herron, and thus, began her storied legislative career; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley followed Representative Herron when he became an officer of the Labor and Consumer Affairs Committee, where she worked with such distinguished public servants and interesting individuals as Chairman Victor Ellis and Vice-Chairman Larry Turner; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley followed Representative Herron when he became an officer of the Judiciary Committee where she put up with such distinguished public servants and notable characters as Chairman Frank Buck and future Senator, Doug Jackson, and where huge numbers of bills meant huge amounts of work, but where pranks, jokes, and laughter also lightened the load; and

WHEREAS, the Judiciary Committee was described by one representative whose bill was defeated as being "like a field full of bean pickers without a foreman," but, in fact, Ms. Binkley often stepped in and stepped up to serve as the committee's *de facto* foreman; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley, through her hard work and diligent service helped Representative Herron win election to the Tennessee Senate in 1996, where he has served from that day to this; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley also served exceptionally as executive assistant when Senator Herron chaired the Senate General Welfare, Health, and Human Services Committee and the Select Committee on Children and Youth, and also when he served as Chairman of the Senate Democratic Caucus, and

WHEREAS, the working relationship of Ms. Binkley and Senator Herron has transcended public service into friendship and, now, even a familial relationship, especially since Roy and his wife, Nancy, were blessed with twin sons, John and Rick, and Ms. Binkley was among the very first family members ever to see and even care for the tiny babes in the neonatal intensive care unit at Vanderbilt University Medical Center; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley became the beloved “third grandmother” not only to John and Rick, but also to their younger brother Ben, and she continues to be exceedingly proud of these young men; and

WHEREAS, Senator Herron long has recognized that the primary reason Ms. Binkley continued to put up with him is because of her love for her almost-adopted grandsons, all of whom she continues to affectionately call “Little Fellas”, even though all three now are college students who tower over her; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley has done all of the hard work in arranging for, scheduling, and orchestrating more than one thousand listening meetings in the 76th House District and the 24th Senatorial District; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley has been the person who made sure that Senator Herron showed up for more than one thousand two hundred fifty House and Senate floor sessions, allowing him to miss only the day her youngest nearly-grandson, Ben, was being born; and

WHEREAS, loyal and tenacious, Ms. Binkley has put up with her charge when he had the flu and other sundry ills and ailments, and even when he broke some ten bones from foolishly falling off his bicycle, an activity which Ms. Binkley repeatedly discouraged, a fact she does not let him forget; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley herself came to work when she was ill, including those times when she was just plain sick of putting up with Senator Herron: and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley helped create and should have been listed as co-prime sponsor of every piece of legislation that Senator Herron sponsored, including the Crime Victims Bill of Rights Constitutional Amendment, numerous crime victims bills, the Self-Defense Act, the Student Religious Liberty Act, the Bible in Schools Act, the Lobbying Ethics Act, other ethics bills, the Whistleblower Law, various anti-smoking bills, and the Healthy Students Act; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley was an incredibly hard worker, typically arriving at work before seven o'clock in the morning and often staying late into the night, and even working weekends when the press of legislative business required; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley was known on occasion to be just as determined or even, some could say, as hard-headed as Senator Herron, a feat requiring the strength and density of a rare diamond formed from coal under enormous pressure; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley is affectionately known as "JB" to her many legislative friends, a nickname she blames Senator Herron for bestowing upon her, she suspects because he was simply in too much of a hurry to annunciate each of the syllables of her first name and, instead, he conferred the double initial moniker upon her; and

WHEREAS, the people of the 76th House and the 24th Senatorial Districts came to know, respect, and even love Ms. Binkley, often telling Senator Herron that they would rather talk to her than to him, and quickly learning the best way to get something done was to talk to Josephine; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley devoted herself tirelessly to serving constituents, taking up the cases and causes of literally hundreds and even thousands of Tennesseans who needed help either from their government or in getting their government to do right by them or leave them alone; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley was so wonderful to the people of the 76th House and the 24th Senatorial Districts that they constantly bragged on her to Senator Herron, causing him to facetiously explain to the citizens that the only way JB could be so nice to them was by being equally mean to him; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Binkley was so devoted and dedicated to serving Tennessee that she continued to work even as she battled cancer and endured not one, not two, but three surgeries, none of which kept her from fulfilling her responsibilities in a courageous and truly heroic way; and

WHEREAS, during her time of serving the State, Ms. Binkley has raised three outstanding children, and she is richly blessed by the love and support of her daughter, Tammy Fuller and her husband Randall, her son Paul “Buzzy” Binkley, Jr., and his wife Kathy, and her son William “Peewee” Binkley; and

WHEREAS, since last September when she retired and, thus, was relieved of the burden of doing both her job and Senator Herron’s, JB has found new spring in her step and Senator Herron describes her as having the energy of a slightly younger sixteen-year-old school girl after her first kiss; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Josephine Binkley has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of her colleagues and a multitude of citizens of this great State; 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 profusely thank Josephine Binkley for her incredible service to Tennessee, for the example she has set for every public servant, and for exemplifying the most profound patriotism for her state and country.

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