

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 244

By Matlock

A RESOLUTION recognizing Allan Benton of Madisonville on his successful career.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are honored and pleased to recognize those citizens whose skills, trades, and business endeavors have enabled them to become unparalleled ambassadors and highly respected representatives of the Volunteer State; and

WHEREAS, Allan Benton of Madisonville is one such Tennessean, who has perfected the preparation of cured pork to such a degree of excellence that he has been deemed by local consumers, America's finest chefs, and international cuisine trendsetters as the "King of Country Ham"; he is the proprietor of a matchless porcine empire and one of the most respected producers in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Benton has been so successful in the production and marketing of his cured pork products that he is being inducted into the James Beard Foundation's 2015 Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America; and

WHEREAS, the James Beard Foundation is a New York City-based nonprofit organization considered to be the center of America's culinary community and dedicated to exploring ways that food enriches our lives; and

WHEREAS, a native of Scott County, Virginia, Allan Benton grew up in the mountain tradition of family hog preparation that was heartily practiced by both sets of grandparents. He worked as a high school guidance counselor, but soon grasped another opportunity that ultimately rekindled the roots of past family traditions; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, Mr. Benton acquired the small, local country ham business of Albert Hicks, and Allan Benton gives him much gratitude for teaching about the curing process and about running a business with southern grace; and

WHEREAS, by design, Benton's Smoky Mountain Country Hams has remained a small business operation with a crew of only eleven employees, and the quality of their cured pork products has always been exceptional. The popularity of and demand for the slow-cured hams and hickory-smoked bacon have grown more robust with the passing of each year; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Benton believes that in time quality will sell itself, and his business success has come about over almost forty years of steady and consistent word-of-mouth promotion of his artisan products; word about the goodness and availability of Benton's products has filtered into and spread throughout robust culinary networks, and the tradition and enjoyment of preserved pork have expanded far beyond East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Allan Benton's slow-cured hams and bacon, which are seasoned with a dry rub of salt, brown sugar, and red and black pepper, are praised and sought after by many famous chefs and cuisine masters. Their enthusiastic testimonials have canonized him as the patron saint of cured pork, which is an elite title for a gentleman who has simply survived and thrived by the roots of his heritage; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Benton is a treasure of this State, and it is with pleasure that we acknowledge the phenomenal success of his career; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Allan Benton upon his induction into the James Beard Foundation's Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America, recognize him as a premier and successful small businessman, thank him for his many contributions to the citizens of Tennessee, and extend our best wishes to him for success in all of his future endeavors.

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