

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 979

By Wirgau

A RESOLUTION to congratulate Bernice Rainey on the celebration of her 100th birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bernice Rainey, a mainstay of the Jones Mill community, will celebrate her 100th birthday on September 5, 2016, a milestone that will be commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, for more than seventy years (1945-2009), Mrs. Rainey operated Rainey's Store in the Jones Mill community west of Puryear on State Route 140 in Henry County; and

WHEREAS, the building itself was constructed circa 1912 with bricks that were hand fired on site; when Mr. and Mrs. Rainey purchased the store in 1945 from a previous owner's estate, the building was completely empty, and their fledging business was further hampered by World War II rationing; and

WHEREAS, Frank Rainey passed away in 1949, when their son Joe was only eight years old; Mrs. Rainey bravely persevered through her grief and loss to keep the business afloat and worked hard to raise her son on the store's proceeds; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Rainey is legendary in Jones Mill, and Rainey's Store was the centerpiece of the community for seventy years or more; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Rainey carried all the grocery staples and made sandwiches, but the store's most important function was serving as a community gathering place; and

WHEREAS, the good people of Jones Mill met at Rainey's Store to discuss the present and future of their community, while keeping abreast of its current affairs; and

WHEREAS, sitting around the wood-burning stove on benches and chairs, with the Colonial Bread bench being the most popular, they discussed topics from A to Z, visited with Mrs. Rainey, and often discussed ways to help a neighbor in need; and

WHEREAS, six days a week, Mrs. Rainey's regular customers came in to converse with each other or enjoy a delicious Bernice Burger (bologna, mustard, and salad dressing on white bread) with a soft drink; Saturdays were reserved for gossip; and

WHEREAS, the nearby North Fork of the Obion River caused Mrs. Rainey some problems over the years, filling her store with eighteen inches of water in 1964 and twenty-three inches in 2001; with the help of her many friends and neighbors, she simply moved her merchandise above the river's reach and reopened after the water subsided; and

WHEREAS, the people of Jones Mill love Bernice Rainey dearly and have paid tribute to her in many ways; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, the Henry County Commission named a bridge spanning the North Fork of the Obion River near Rainey's Store in her honor, and she also served as grand marshal of the Cottage Grove Freedom Festival Parade; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, her birthday was designated "Bernice Rainey Day" in Henry County by the county mayor; and

WHEREAS, one of the seven children of Taylor and Nina Holley, Bernice was born on September 5, 1916, in a home that was a mere one-half mile east of the store that was her lifeblood for seventy years; and

WHEREAS, as she approaches her personal centennial, Mrs. Rainey enjoys reading and crocheting, but is most grateful for the love and companionship she shares with her son, Joe Rainey; her granddaughters, Gina Harrell and Greta Donat; and her great-grandchildren, Taylor and Courtland Harrell and Clay, Braden, and AnnaElise Hosford; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Rainey is the oldest living member of Puryear Church of Christ; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this opportunity to specially recognize a living legend and community icon on this very special occasion; 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 honor and congratulate Mrs. Bernice Rainey on the celebration of her 100th birthday and extend to her our best wishes for much continued happiness.

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