

HOUSE RESOLUTION 306

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John Jay Hooker of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this body were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of John Jay Hooker; and

WHEREAS, John Jay Hooker was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked tirelessly for more than fifty years to serve the citizens of our State and nation; and

WHEREAS, born in Nashville on August 24, 1930, John Jay Hooker came from a long line of distinguished public servants and true American patriots; his father, John Jay Hooker, Sr., was a famous trial lawyer; his grandfather, Henry Williamson, was a signer of the Tennessee Constitution; and his mother, Darthula Hooker June, was a descendant of Governor William Blount, who was a signer of the United States Constitution and president of the 1796 Tennessee Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hooker attended Palmer Grammar School, graduated from Montgomery Bell Academy, and attended the University of the South, Sewanee, for three years; and

WHEREAS, following the patriotic tradition for which the Volunteer State is renowned, John Jay Hooker answered duty's call and served his country with honor as a Line of Duty Investigator with the United States Army from 1953 until 1955; and

WHEREAS, after completing his military service, Mr. Hooker graduated from Vanderbilt University Law School in 1957, and embarked on a long and prestigious career in law and politics; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, Governor Frank Clement tasked John Jay Hooker to investigate Judge Raulston Schoolfield's bribery case and present the findings to the Tennessee House of

Representatives, and after the House voted to impeach, Mr. Hooker was selected to represent that body at the trial before the Senate; and

WHEREAS, during the trial, Robert F. Kennedy was called to testify, and from that meeting, the two developed a close personal friendship that lasted until Mr. Kennedy's death in 1968; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1958, John Jay Hooker donated his time and tremendous talents as national director of Professional Men and Women for the 1960 John Kennedy/Lyndon Johnson presidential campaign in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, as a special assistant to Robert F. Kennedy, Mr. Hooker was instrumental in involving the Department of Justice in the Tennessee case *Baker v. Carr*, which eventually became known as the "One-Man-One-Vote Case" and which Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren once called the most important case ever decided by the Warren court; and

WHEREAS, stepping into the private sector, John Jay Hooker founded the law firm of Hooker, Hooker, and Willis in Nashville in 1958, became the general counsel for the *Nashville Tennessean* in 1962, was one of the five founders of Hospital Corporation of America in 1968, and was named chairman of the board of the STP Corporation in 1973; and

WHEREAS, an exceptional businessman with a knack for the news industry, Mr. Hooker arranged for the sale of *The Tennessean* to Gannett Corporation in 1979, put together a syndicate that bought a partial interest in the Newspaper Printing Corporation, became publisher of the *Nashville Banner*, and was named chairman of United Press International; and

WHEREAS, possessing the rare ability to transform a vision into a dynamic business achievement, Mr. Hooker listened to his entrepreneurial spirit and founded the restaurants Hooker Hamburgers in 1984 and Minnie Pearl's Chicken in 1967, which sold over 3,000 franchises in approximately eighteen months; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hooker was a distinguished statesman who devoted his life to creating a brighter future for the good people of Tennessee and all Americans; he won the Democratic primary for governor in 1970, and ran an inspiring campaign for the United States Senate in 1976; and

WHEREAS, a principal advisor to former presidential candidate Ross Perot, John Jay Hooker played a pivotal role in convincing Mr. Perot to run for the highest office in the land in 1992; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, Mr. Hooker turned his sights to campaign reform efforts across America and donated his legal skills and vast constitutional knowledge to a variety of lawsuits that challenged nonvoter and out-of-state campaign contributions; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, John Jay Hooker heeded the warning his good friend, Muhammad Ali, once gave him: “Never get in a fight with a man with more to lose than you do,” and he used that sage advice as motivation to pursue his own goals; and

WHEREAS, a gifted orator, Mr. Hooker often left classrooms and lecture halls with audiences in awe of how he skillfully recounted the various stories of his fascinating life; and

WHEREAS, known for his brilliant insights and hallmark expressions, Mr. Hooker often said, “The greatest feeling in life is falling in love, and there is nothing like falling in love with an idea,” and he fell hopelessly and passionately in love with the United States Constitution and the timeless wisdom it contains; and

WHEREAS, throughout his glorious decades on this earth, John Jay Hooker stood as a staunch advocate for the State and federal constitutions, and spent much of his time and energies challenging the constitutionality of various laws and regulations, always endeavoring to ensure and strengthen the integrity, constitutionality, fairness, and effectiveness of Tennessee’s and the United States’ government and courts; and

WHEREAS, John Jay Hooker exemplified the spirit and allegiance to family, community, and country that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Hooker is survived by his devoted children, Dara, John Blount, Kendall, and Lovell; and his treasured grandchildren, Jacob, Grace, Nathan, and Anna; and

WHEREAS, John Jay Hooker 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; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this body should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of John Jay Hooker, 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. Hooker.

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