

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 727

By Beavers

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of the late William Lee "Bill" Patton on the occasion of his induction into the Wilson County Agricultural Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, agriculture has been a cornerstone of Wilson County since the county's founding in 1799, and those citizens involved in farming have always been a vital part of the community; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly specially recognize those outstanding citizens who dedicated their lives to promoting the importance of agriculture in our society; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable individual is the late William Lee "Bill" Patton, who was posthumously inducted into the Wilson County Agricultural Hall of Fame on April 5, 2016, for his legacy in continuing the time-honored tradition of the family farm; and

WHEREAS, born July 25, 1938, William Lee "Bill" Patton delivered groceries by bicycle at an early age, but this little boy in overalls acquired his lifelong love of farming from his grandfather, Everett Patton, his constant companion and role model; and

WHEREAS, as a teenager, Mr. Patton embraced his hometown as quarterback of the Watertown High School football team and earned most valuable player honors while playing on the school's basketball team his senior year; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from high school, Mr. Patton married Margie Faye James of Mt. Juliet and joined the U.S. Air Force; the military stationed him in Japan for a year, and then his young wife was able to join him in Oregon for the final two and one-half years of his service; and

WHEREAS, after he was discharged, the couple returned to Wilson County with their baby daughter and made their home in Mt. Juliet, and Mr. Patton began a more than forty-year career, first with Western Electric and eventually AT&T; and

WHEREAS, he never lost his love for farming and continued to raise produce and beef cattle, working early shifts in order to have the rest of the day to farm; Bill and Faye Patton were blessed with another daughter and a son, so he had three more farmhands to plant tobacco, tie up tomatoes, and rake hay; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Patton worked in the logging business for a time and was an active member of the Wilson County Farmers Co-op, Wilson County Fair Board, Wilson County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, Cattlemen's Association, and various other community organizations; he also served his local government as an elected member of the Wilson County Commission for sixteen years and the Mt. Juliet City Commission for one term in the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, the Pattons were charter members of Victory Baptist Church in Mt. Juliet; Mr. Patton's love of God and family stood first in his life, but farming was a close second; and

WHEREAS, during the last eleven years of his life, Mr. Patton battled cancer; when his oncologist explained to him that he needed to limit his activity and that farming was too strenuous, Mr. Patton simply replied, "If I'm not farming, I'm not living"; and

WHEREAS, the Wilson County Agricultural Hall of Fame honors those dedicated citizens who committed their lives to developing and maintaining the highest standards and principles in their chosen vocation, and it is fitting that this General Assembly honor the memory of the late William Lee "Bill" Patton for his valuable service to agriculture and the farming community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor the memory of the late William Lee "Bill" Patton on the occasion of his induction into the Wilson County Agricultural Hall of Fame, as we reflect fondly

upon his many contributions to upholding the agricultural traditions of Wilson County and the State of Tennessee.

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