

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 33

By Clemmons

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Jane G. Eskind of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Jane G. Eskind, a groundbreaking leader for women's rights, education, and the arts and the first woman to win statewide elected office in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a true champion for progress and social justice, Jane Eskind was the first woman to chair the Tennessee Democratic Party and was prominent as a national political leader for decades; and

WHEREAS, Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., said, "I saw her stand up to prejudice, speak out against injustice, and work her heart out for all the people of Tennessee and for her beloved nation."; and

WHEREAS, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, Jane Eskind was educated at Brandeis University in Boston, Massachusetts, and the University of Louisville; she relocated to Nashville in 1956 with her husband, Richard J. Eskind; and

WHEREAS, the first woman to run for statewide office in Tennessee, Jane Eskind won the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate in 1978; facing an uphill battle against popular incumbent Senator Howard Baker, Jr., her inspirational campaign won admiration across the State and the nation, including from President Jimmy Carter who came to Tennessee to campaign for her; and

WHEREAS, although unsuccessful in her effort at that time, Mrs. Eskind quickly became a national political leader and served twice on the Democratic National Platform Committee; she actively campaigned for countless Democratic candidates at the federal, state, and local levels during her lifetime; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Jane Eskind became the first woman in Tennessee history to win a statewide office when she was elected to a seat on the Public Service Commission, which she later served as chair; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, she sought the Democratic nomination for Governor of Tennessee, finishing second to then-Speaker of the House Ned McWherter, but she immediately went to work campaigning for his eventual election victory that November; and

WHEREAS, Jane Eskind was a force of nature in the Democratic Party, and many rightfully credited her with attracting a stronger spotlight to women in state politics. Nashville Mayor Megan Barry said, "She was an incredible advocate for women being involved in the political process – whether it be running for office, supporting each other's campaigns, or exercising our right to vote – and her contributions to our civic life cannot be understated."; and

WHEREAS, highly respected and greatly admired for her leadership and wisdom, Jane Eskind served as chair of the Tennessee Commission on the Status of Women, a charter member of Women Executives in State Government, a trustee to the Vice President's Residence Foundation, and a member of the Brandeis University Board of Trust; and

WHEREAS, active in an array of causes and organizations, Mrs. Eskind lent her significant time and talents to the Anti-Defamation League, the International Women's Forum, Tennessee Tomorrow, NashvilleREAD, Nashville CARES, Legal Aid Society, the Nashville Institute for the Arts, the League of Women Voters, the Kelly Miller Smith Institute on African American Church Studies, Family and Children's Services, and New Leadership South; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Jane Eskind received numerous honors during her lifetime, including a lifetime achievement award from the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, the first lifetime achievement award in the organization's history from the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, and the illustrious honor of being the first inductee into the Tennessee Women's Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Jane Eskind played a prominent role in the founding of Congregation Micah, which she served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, devoted to her family, Jane Eskind enjoyed the support and companionship of her husband of more than sixty-two years, Richard J. Eskind; she was the proud mother of

two children, Ellen Lehman and Billy Eskind, and beloved grandmother of six grandchildren, Jeremy Lehman, Madeline Eskind, Doni Lehman, Alec Eskind, Issac Eskind, and Jude Eskind; and

WHEREAS, Jane Eskind leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the extraordinary life of Jane Eskind, a woman of courage and accomplishment who truly embodied the volunteer spirit of the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Jane G. Eskind, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her 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 Mrs. Eskind.

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