

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 656

By Zachary

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Phillip Edward Fulmer, Sr., upon his appointment as the director of athletics at the University of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have distinguished themselves as leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Phillip Edward Fulmer, Sr., who was recently appointed athletic director at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK); and

WHEREAS, after serving as a special assistant to the athletic director at East Tennessee State University, Phillip Fulmer was appointed a special adviser to UT System President Joe DiPietro for community, athletics, and University relations on June 20, 2017; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 2017, the University announced that Mr. Fulmer had been appointed to serve as the athletic director; and

WHEREAS, this outstanding appointment opens the door for further worthwhile contributions from Phillip Fulmer, a man who has long since established a lasting athletic legacy at the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, within six days of his hiring, Mr. Fulmer successfully finalized a deal to make Jeremy Pruitt the twenty-sixth head coach of the University's football program, which was undoubtedly the first of many more accomplishments to come; and

WHEREAS, born on September 1, 1950, Phillip Fulmer, a Winchester native, attended Franklin County High School. His storied college football history began when he enrolled at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in 1968; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fulmer was a college athlete of extraordinary ability and unwavering work ethic, and he helped lead his teammates to the Southeastern Conference (SEC)

Championship in 1969 and victories in the Sugar Bowl in 1970 and the Liberty Bowl in 1971;  
and

WHEREAS, Phillip Fulmer began his illustrious coaching career as a student linebacker coach for the Tennessee Volunteers in 1973. He continued to hone his abilities at Wichita State University, where he coached the offensive line and linebackers from 1974 through 1978. He then served as an assistant coach at Vanderbilt University in 1979; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Coach Fulmer returned to his alma mater, beginning a thirteen-year tenure as an assistant coach. During this period, he served as an offensive line coach and offensive coordinator, and he helped guide and mold such notable players as Billy Mayo, Raleigh McKenzie, Bruce Wilkerson, Harry Galbreath, Charles McRae, Antone Davis, and Tom Myslinski. During this time, the Volunteers set school records for total offensive yards in three consecutive seasons; and

WHEREAS, Phillip Fulmer served as the interim head coach during a critical stretch of the 1992 season before being named the head coach before the 1993 season. As the head coach of the Vols, he led his teams to an incredible level of success; and

WHEREAS, under Coach Fulmer, the Tennessee Volunteers were ranked as one of the top ten teams in the nation for an incredible fifty-four consecutive weeks, and nine of his teams won ten or more games in a season; and

WHEREAS, he also led the Big Orange to SEC championship games in 1997, 1998, 2001, 2004, and 2007, bringing the SEC championship title home to Rocky Top in 1997 and 1998; and

WHEREAS, most notably, Phillip Fulmer led the undefeated 1998 Volunteers to the first Bowl Championship Series National Championship, besting Florida State by a final score of 23-16; and

WHEREAS, Coach Fulmer led the Volunteers to a record of ninety-eight wins to only thirty-four losses in SEC play during his tenure as head coach and an overall record of 152 wins to fifty-two losses. Those 152 wins make him the second-winningest coach in the University's history, trailing only General Robert Neyland; and

WHEREAS, eighteen of his players were chosen for First Team All-American honors during his tenure, including Volunteer greats Peyton Manning, Al Wilson, Leonard Little, and Eric Berry. Ninety-three of his players were drafted into the National Football League, including eighteen who were chosen in the first round; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Coach Fulmer was recognized as the AFCA Region 2 Coach of the Year in 1993, the SEC Coach of the Year and the National Coach of the Year in 1998, and the Eddie Robinson National Coach of Distinction in 1999. He received the General Robert R. Neyland Trophy in 2009; and

WHEREAS, he gained induction into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 2001 and the Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame in 2008. During his first year of eligibility, Coach Fulmer was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Phillip Fulmer has served as a national spokesperson for the Jason Foundation, an organization dedicated to building public awareness about the problem of youth suicide, a cause he also championed on behalf of the American Football Coaches Association. He also served as a member of the board of directors for such distinguished organizations as the Boys & Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts of America, and East Tennessee Alzheimer's Association; and

WHEREAS, his many tremendous accomplishments aside, Phillip Fulmer is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Vicky Fulmer, and their four children, Phillip, Jr., Courtney, Brittany, and Allison; and

WHEREAS, Coach Fulmer is the embodiment of being a "Vol For Life," having served the University for more than forty years as a student, athlete, assistant coach, and national-championship-winning head coach; and

WHEREAS, his many successes and contributions to UT athletics will only continue as he serves his alma mater once more, now as the athletic director; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Fulmer epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly find it appropriate to pause in their deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Phillip Fulmer for his dedication to the State of Tennessee and its citizens; 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 and commend Phillip Edward Fulmer, Sr., upon his appointment as the director of athletics at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, applaud his many previous accomplishments with the University, and extend to him our best wishes for his every continued success.

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