

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 622

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to commemorate Bob Underwood's heroism on the anniversary of the Harriman Flood of 1929.

WHEREAS, on March 22-23, 1929, the southern United States were inundated with tornadoes and flooding that caused at least forty-six deaths in six states; and

WHEREAS, the greatest loss of life was in Tennessee, where twenty people died in the flood waters of the Emory River at Harriman, with only two bodies recovered; seven members of the local Boy Scout troop perished in Rockwood; and three persons died in Webster; and

WHEREAS, Bob Underwood of Harriman was a model employee of the Key City Coal Company, who was known for his "honesty, generosity, and fair dealings"; a hard-working man, he often gave poor people coal without expectation of ever receiving payment; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Underwood and his family lived in the lowlands in a bottom of the Emory River known as Tanner Flats; on the morning of March 23, 1929, he awoke to discover the violent flood waters closing in, and he immediately went house-to-house to warn people of the imminent danger; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Underwood hitched his team to the wagon and transported his family to safety; he then returned home to make a heroic, but ultimately futile, attempt to save his neighbors, the Jenkins family; and

WHEREAS, after he had started to drive to safety with the Jenkins family aboard, a wall of water, an estimated four feet in height, struck the team and wagon, and all occupants were killed, with the exception of Mr. Jenkins, who miraculously survived; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Underwood courageously battled the oncoming flood, but he was handicapped by being entangled in the reins of his team, and the swiftness of the flood waters and the large amount of drift were too much for him to overcome; and

WHEREAS, some eighty-nine years ago, Bob Underwood heroically answered the call of duty amid the raging flood waters of the Emory River, but sadly, he sacrificed his own life while attempting to save the lives of his fellow citizens of Harriman, and his family was bereft of a loving husband and father; and

WHEREAS, we should never allow Tennesseans such as Bob Underwood and their courageous deeds to be forgotten, for their actions speak loudly and persuasively about the inner fortitude, virtue, and selflessness of human beings in times of emergency and remind us that heroes will always walk among us, no matter where or when we live; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we commemorate Bob Underwood's heroism in saving his family and attempting to save others from the rising waters of the Emory River on March 23, 1929, as we memorialize the anniversary of the Harriman Flood of 1929.

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