

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 774

By Faison

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Kobe Bean Bryant and Gianna Bryant.

WHEREAS, we were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Kobe Bean Bryant and his daughter Gianna Bryant in a tragic accident in Calabasas, California, on January 26, 2020; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong Los Angeles Lakers fan, Mr. Bryant played all of his stellar twenty-year National Basketball Association (NBA) career as a shooting guard for the Lakers organization, making him one of the most accomplished players to ever play for one of the most accomplished teams in the history of the sport; and

WHEREAS, Kobe Bryant, son of former NBA player Joe Bryant, was one of the most prolific players to ever grace the hardwood, and his influence on the sport will surely be remembered for many years to come; he is widely regarded as one of the greatest players in the history of the sport, currently sitting fourth all-time in points, eighth all-time in minutes played, fifteenth all-time in games played, and seventeenth all-time in steals; and

WHEREAS, he had a stellar high school career at Lower Merion High School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, where he was a varsity player all four years; he ended his high school career as Southeastern Pennsylvania's all-time leading scorer with 2,883 points. As a senior, he averaged 30.8 points, 12 rebounds, 6.5 assists, 4 steals, and 3.8 blocks to bring the school its first state championship in fifty-three years; his play earned him numerous honors even before he began his professional career, including being named Naismith High School Player of the Year, Gatorade Men's National Basketball Player of the Year, and a McDonald's All-American; and

WHEREAS, drafted with the thirteenth pick of the 1996 NBA Draft by the Charlotte Hornets, he was the sixth player in league history to forgo a college basketball career in favor of declaring for the NBA draft out of high school; he was traded to the Lakers without ever having played a game for the Hornets and would go on to win the 1997 Slam Dunk Contest during his rookie year, placing him firmly on fans' radars, where he would stay for the remainder of his estimable career; and

WHEREAS, over the course of his twenty-year career in the NBA, Mr. Bryant averaged 25 points, 5.2 rebounds, 4.7 assists, and 1.5 steals per game and led the league in scoring on two occasions; he was a five-time NBA champion, winning three of his five titles consecutively with the help of fellow basketball legend Shaquille "Shaq" O'Neil and earning his two Finals MVP Awards in the years after Shaq's departure from the team; and

WHEREAS, he is one of the most acclaimed players in league history, having received the Most Valuable Player award in 2008, a record eighteen consecutive All-Star selections, and the All-Star Game MVP four times; he made fifteen All-NBA Teams, including eleven First Team selections, and twelve All-Defensive Teams, including nine First Team selections, and was named to the All-Rookie team during the 1996-1997 season; and

WHEREAS, his many achievements on the basketball court aside, Mr. Bryant was a talented musician, director, author, and entrepreneur; he was the first African American to win the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film for his film *Dear Basketball* and his book, *The Mamba Mentality: How I Play*, is highly lauded by those involved in the sport of basketball; and

WHEREAS, his experience in the music industry began in high school when he was a member of the rap group CHEIZAW; the group signed a deal with Sony Entertainment. He released his own single, "K.O.B.E." featuring Tyra Banks, in 2000 and was featured on songs with various other artists, including a song by Taiwanese singer Jay Chou, a remix of Brian McKnight's "Hold Me," Shaquille O'Neil's "3X's Dope," and a live performance with Sway & King Tech; and

WHEREAS, his company, Kobe Inc., works to own and grow brands in the sports industry, including providing the initial investment for Bodyarmor SuperDrink; he launched Bryant-Stibel, a venture capital firm, with his business partner Jeff Stibel; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, Kobe Bryant faced allegations of sexual assault from an employee at a hotel where he was staying, and, while criminal charges were dropped and a civil suit was settled out of court, Mr. Bryant used the situation as an opportunity for personal growth, publicly apologizing afterwards, indicating that he truly understood the severity of the situation; and

WHEREAS, his philanthropic endeavors include the Kobe Bryant China Fund, an organization that raises money for education and health programs in China, and service as the official ambassador for After-School All-Stars, a nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive after-school programs to children in thirteen U.S. cities; in 2010, he appeared alongside Zach Braff to present a \$1 million check to the Call of Duty Endowment, which aids veterans in transitioning to civilian life; and

WHEREAS, his commitment to the game of basketball was matched only by his commitment to his family; he was a loving husband to his wife, Vanessa, and was wholly devoted to their daughters, making time to attend their sporting events and school activities even on days when he had team practices or other professional obligations; and

WHEREAS, Gianna Bryant, Kobe Bryant's thirteen-year-old daughter, also passed in the accident; she enjoyed playing basketball, a fact which deeply bonded her and her father, and she was grateful for his involvement in her life both on and off the court; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should pause to remember the bountiful life of Kobe Bryant, an exceptional athlete, public servant, and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Kobe Bean Bryant and Gianna Bryant, reflecting fondly upon their impeccable character and stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction. We offer our condolences to the Bryant family during this difficult time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the families of the other seven people who passed in the tragic accident, John Altobelli, Keri Altobelli, Alyssa Altobelli, Christina Mauser, Sarah Chester, Payton Chester, and Ara Zobayan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.