

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1204

By Weaver

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of James L. Bass, Jr., of Carthage.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of James L. Bass, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, James Bass was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born in Smith County in June 1921, James Bass was the son of J.L. and Linnie Gibbs Bass; he graduated from Gordonsville High School in 1939 and matriculated at Cumberland University, where he helped pay for his tuition by waiting tables in the university's dining room; and

WHEREAS, his college studies were interrupted by the United States' entrance into World War II; Mr. Bass completed basic training for the United States Army and then completed extensive coursework in radio operation, Morse code, and maintenance and procedure at an Army facility in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He later attended aerial gunnery school in Yuma, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, James Bass served as a radio operator and aerial gunner on a heavy bomber assigned to the United States Army Air Corps stationed with the 457th Bomb Group and the 8th Air Force in Conington, England, and he saw combat during the Battle of the Bulge, the Rhineland Offensive, and the Central Europe Campaign; and

WHEREAS, for his distinguished military service, Mr. Bass received a number of medals and commendations, including the European, African, and Middle East Campaign Medal with battle stars, the Air Medal with clusters, the Victory Medal, and the French Foreign Legion

Medal of Honor, the highest honor bestowed by the French government, for his role in liberating French prisoners of war; and

WHEREAS, upon his return home at the conclusion of the war, James Bass resumed his education and graduated with his bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in 1947 and his Juris Doctor degree from Vanderbilt University in 1949, thus beginning his long career in law that would continue until just days before his death; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bass was instrumental in the formation and development of the Smith Utility District, locating a favorable source of financing to begin the project and providing legal services to the district for more than a half-century. He also played an integral part in the securing of funds for rural telephone systems, bringing modern telephone service to rural areas, and served as legal counsel to a trade association, NTCA, whose membership consisted of rural telephone systems across the nation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bass was an important part of his community who served on the Smith County Industrial Board and prepared the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws for the Industrial Board, the Smith County Chamber of Commerce, and the Smith County Heritage Museum. He was also a licensed funeral director, and at the time of his death, was the oldest licensed funeral director in the State; and

WHEREAS, dedicated to the preservation of the past, James Bass wrote an account of the history of the rural telephone program and the historical text *Fait Accompli: A Historical Account of the 457th Bomb Group*; and

WHEREAS, active in all levels of the Methodist Church, Mr. Bass was a longtime member of Carthage United Methodist Church, which he served faithfully for many years as a Sunday School teacher; and

WHEREAS, he was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bass is survived by his children, James David (Dawn) Bass and Jane Elizabeth (Larry) Turner; his grandchildren, Emily Jane Bass, James Gregory Bass, Lilly Katherine Turner, and Steven (Kerri) Clemons; and his special friend, Tiffany Angel; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, James Bass was preceded in death by his beloved wife of sixty-two years, Erma Elizabeth Armistead Bass; his son, John Lillard Bass; and his siblings, Paul B. Bass, Bernie S. Bass, and Cara Duncan Bass; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bass leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional 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 James L. Bass, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his 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 Mr. Bass.

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.