

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1280

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to commend Senator Dolores Gresham for her honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as a member of the General Assembly.

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that the members of this General Assembly honor those fellow legislators who performed their duties with the utmost integrity and whose efforts during their time in office were dedicated to providing thoughtful and exemplary service to their district and to this great State; and

WHEREAS, Senator Dolores Gresham of Somerville is one such distinguished public servant who served both her constituency and this General Assembly with honor and ability; and

WHEREAS, Dolores Gresham distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to her constituency, representing Senate District 26 (Chester, Decatur, Fayette, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, McNairy, and Henderson counties) as a member of the 106th through 111th General Assemblies and House District 94 (Fayette, Hardeman, and Tipton counties) as a member of the 103rd through 105th General Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gresham is a highly influential figure in the political, social, and civic life of Southwest Tennessee and was a champion for education reform; and

WHEREAS, Dolores Gresham holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of the Incarnate Word, a Master of Science degree from George Washington University, and a Master of Arts degree from Loyola University New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gresham proudly served her country as a member of the United States Marine Corps and honorably retired at the rank of lieutenant colonel; and

WHEREAS, throughout her service in the General Assembly, Dolores Gresham was prominent as a dedicated and well-informed legislator who always voted her conscience; and

WHEREAS, as an active and dynamic participant in the legislative process during her time in the General Assembly, Senator Gresham rendered sterling service as chair of the Senate Education Committee, co-chair of the Joint Education Oversight Committee, and member of the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee, the Senate Energy, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, the Senate Finance, Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Commerce, Labor and Agriculture Committee, the Senate Transportation Committee, and the Joint Veterans Affairs Committee. She also served as vice chair of the House Higher Education Subcommittee and member of the House Agriculture Committee and the House Education Committee; and

WHEREAS, a fearless champion for the children of Tennessee, Senator Gresham presided over and led the Senate Education Committee during the time of the greatest improvement in academic achievement in the history of the State; and

WHEREAS, a tremendous advocate for the rights of the people of Tennessee in their sovereign might and their representatives in the legislative branch of State government, Senator Gresham revamped the confirmation process of educational boards and commissions, ensuring accountability in the State's educational enterprise, and from those board members chosen to lead it; and

WHEREAS, not a Senator who shied away from her committee's oversight responsibilities, Senator Gresham frequently required thorough explanation and accountability from executive branch agencies over which her committee had jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, never satisfied with the status quo, Senator Gresham ensured that the Senate Education Committee would be the driving force in revamping Title 49 of the Tennessee Code Annotated to focus on the success of and opportunities for students rather than the comfort of adults; and

WHEREAS, always a defender of the dignity of the Senate and its processes as the expression of a free people, Chairman Gresham was known to silence the room with a single word or a rap of the gavel if protests turned to disruption; and

WHEREAS, a respected pioneer in education reform throughout the republic, Senator Gresham served in senior leadership positions in the Foundation for Excellence in Education; the Education Commission of the States, where she served as vice chair; and the Southern Legislative Conference, where she served as education chair; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gresham is a Henry Toll Fellow of the Council of State Governments, a member of the Southern Regional Education Board, and an alumna of the Southern Legislative Conference Center for the Advancement of Leadership Skills program; and

WHEREAS, Dolores Gresham has proven that citizens can make a difference by being involved in community service and leading by example; and

WHEREAS, a respected and trusted leader, Senator Gresham is director of the Fayette Haywood Enterprise Community, past director of the National Cattle Women's Association, and past president of the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce, the Tennessee Cattle Women's Association, and Fayette Cares. She is a member of the Southwest Tennessee Community College Foundation, the Fayette County Forestry Association, the Fayette County Foster Care Review Board, the Local Workforce Investment Board, the Fayette County and Tipton County livestock associations, Tennessee Farm Bureau, and Hardeman County Right to Life. She serves on the pastor council of St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church and is a life member of the National Rifle Association and the National Skeet Shooting Association; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and awards, Senator Dolores Gresham has received the C.P. Boyd Award from the WestStar Leadership Program and was named Fayette County's Citizen of the Year in 2000; and

WHEREAS, throughout her outstanding career as a public servant, Dolores Gresham worked tirelessly on behalf of her constituents, bringing to her office an honorable bearing and the traditional values of hard work and common sense; and

WHEREAS, Senator Dolores Gresham is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the Volunteer State, and she should be specially recognized for her exemplary tenure in the General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor Senator Dolores Gresham for her meritorious service to Tennessee as a member of the General Assembly, commend her for her countless contributions and many good works in service of the 26th Senate District and 94th House District, and extend to her our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

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.