

SENATE RESOLUTION 84

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor Rob Woodson and the Woodson Family of LaFollette for 100 years in business.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body recognize those Tennessee families who, through their commitment to excellence in business, have greatly contributed to their communities; and

WHEREAS, for the past 100 years, the Woodson Family has been serving their neighbors in LaFollette, providing quality products and services and bringing economic opportunities to the area; Rob Woodson, the third generation bearing that name, carries the mantle of the family business as it celebrates its centennial year; and

WHEREAS, Rob Woodson's great-grandparents moved to the Powell Valley area prior to the Civil War; his grandfather, R.L. "Pop" Woodson, is the patriarch of the family business in LaFollette and the first of four generations of Robert Lee Woodsons; and

WHEREAS, Pop Woodson's entrepreneurial spirit led him first to begin a horse and buggy taxi service in the early 1900s, transporting passengers from the train depot to the Russell Hotel in downtown LaFollette; and

WHEREAS, in 1919, Pop Woodson opened Woodson's Cash Store in the building that currently houses Derek's Place pawn shop; in 1940, his son, R.L. Woodson, Jr., left the University of Tennessee two years shy of completing his degree in order to enter the family business during difficult economic times; and

WHEREAS, father and son went on to open a second grocery store, Circus Market, next door to Woodson's Cash Store, and in the 1950s, they opened a store in Oak Ridge at Elza

Gate, the former entrance to the Oak Ridge nuclear facility; the Oak Ridge store closed in 1963; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, Woodson's Supermarket opened in LaFollette; that location is now Hometown IGA and is commonly referred to as "Old Woodson's." The downtown location closed in 1970, the same year that Rob Woodson joined the business; and

WHEREAS, Rob Woodson had been helping his father and grandfather in the family stores since he was ten years old, but he joined the grocery business in earnest after graduating from college; in 1971, only a year after he came on board full time, Rob Woodson, along with his father, began to acquire land for what would become Woodson's Mall; and

WHEREAS, R.L. Woodson, Jr., designed the mall on the dinner table at home; he then took the plans to an architect, who used them to design the shopping center. The resulting 207,504-square-foot mall opened in 1978 and housed thirty businesses; and

WHEREAS, the anchor of the mall was the newest family grocery store, Woodson's New World of Shopping, which was innovative in the grocery business at the time. It was the first grocery store in the State to scan using the UPC code for pricing, and the store also featured a special location for grocery pickup; and

WHEREAS, the grocery store in Woodson's Mall has been operated by Food City since 2009. Though the Woodsons are no longer in the grocery store business, in large part due to the changes in logistics and competition from bigger chain stores, Rob Woodson continues to manage the tenants of Woodson's Mall; and

WHEREAS, for the last 100 years, the Woodson Family has made an integral impact on the economic well-being of the people of LaFollette and Campbell County, all while providing superior service and building strong relationships within the community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we recognize and honor Rob Woodson and the Woodson Family of LaFollete for 100 years of excellence in business, extending our best wishes for their 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.