

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Ned McWherter on his retirement from public service.

WHEREAS, in 1968 a young man from Weakley County took his seat in the state House of Representatives, thus beginning one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of Tennessee public service; and

WHEREAS, after only four years, the sharecropper's son was elected by his colleagues as Speaker of the House, a position he used to redefine the role and process of Tennessee's legislative branch of government; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, the Legislature for the first time became an equal partner with the Governor in the development of laws and policies that seek to improve the quality of life for millions of Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, during his unprecedented fourteen years as Speaker, the House of Representatives departed from its sister states and operated in a climate of bipartisan cooperation that laid the foundation for a generation of progress in Tennessee and continues to this day; and

WHEREAS, in 1986 he was elected to the office of Governor with the simple message that Tennessee's economic future depends on every community having access to good schools, good roads and affordable health care; and

WHEREAS, on the day he was sworn in as Governor, Tennessee's rate of unemployment was a point above the national average and more than forty counties had unemployment rates greater than ten percent; and

WHEREAS, by reducing the number of state employees and utilizing wisely the resources of a state government that was twice named the best managed in America, he set about rebuilding Tennessee's economic base in each of the State's 95 counties; and

WHEREAS, to the surprise of many throughout the country, through his leadership Tennessee enacted and funded one of the nation's most comprehensive programs of education reform, including greater flexibility for local communities, higher standards for students, tougher accountability for the public, and a new funding formula that for the first time provided every Tennessee school with the resources needed for a quality education; and

WHEREAS, instead of easing through his last year as Governor, he courageously embarked upon an aggressive effort to reform a Medicaid program whose out-of-control spending threatened the very financial stability of state government; and

WHEREAS, as a result of his innovative health care reforms and his willingness to withstand resistance to their implementation. Tennessee has simultaneously regained control over health care costs while providing health care coverage to more of its population than any state in America; and

WHEREAS, he concludes his tenure as Governor by leaving his successor the strongest economy in the State's history, with record unemployment levels two points below the national average, the nation's highest growth in personal income over the last decade, and only one Tennessee county with an unemployment rate greater than ten percent; and

WHEREAS, he leaves a legacy of progress that has moved Tennessee from its historic position among the bottom of the fifty states to one of a national leader in education, health care, corrections, fiscal management and economic development; and

WHEREAS, as future generations of school children study the State's first two centuries, they will likely judge the sharecropper's son from Weakley County to be among the greatest Tennesseans ever to offer themselves to public service; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we hereby honor Ned

McWherter, whose historic contributions as Speaker of the House and as Governor will result in immeasurable benefit to the people of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a framed copy of this resolution be placed in the House of Representatives as a testimony to the man who in so many ways was a product of this Body.