

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 249

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Robert Neff Sr. of Knoxville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Robert Neff Sr.; and

WHEREAS, Robert "Bob" Neff 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 on June 1, 1931, to Herbert and Wanda Neff, Bob Neff graduated from Knoxville High School in 1949 before matriculating to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, from which he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees while standing as a valued member of the university's track team; and

WHEREAS, he continued his postgraduate education at the University of Tennessee, completing forty-five hours of administration and supervision studies; and

WHEREAS, he was a proud and valorous member of the United States Armed Forces, serving as an instructor in the Signal Corps of the United States Army while he was stationed in Augusta, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Neff was a sterling educator and education administrator for many years, during which time he earned the respect and admiration of his peers and students; and

WHEREAS, Bob Neff first taught at South High School, where he coached football, basketball, track, and cross country, and he was named the Knoxville City Schools Teacher of the Year in 1965; and

WHEREAS, before his retirement from education, Mr. Neff served as the assistant principal of South High School and South Young High School, and South Young's chapter of the National Honor Society is named the "Robert Lee Neff Chapter" in his honor; and

WHEREAS, Bob Neff was a longtime contributor to and leader in Knoxville's track community; he was a founder of the Knoxville Track Club and served for many years as a track official for Tennessee's track and field events; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Robert Neff Sr. gained induction into the Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame in 1998, was inducted into the Knoxville Track Club Hall of Fame, and was named the top track official in the State of Tennessee by the United States Track and Field Association; and

WHEREAS, he also held the title of Emeritus Official, a recognition given by the United States Track and Field Association, and was the recipient of the East Tennessee chapter of the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame's Distinguished Service Award, the Volunteer Track Classic Outstanding Service Award, the Sam Venable Sr. Award for Outstanding Service for Track and Field, a special award from the University of Tennessee coaches given in recognition for his work with the Dogwood Relays, the Founders Award given in recognition for his work with the Volunteer Track Classic, and the Robert L. Neff Service Award, a perpetual award named for him and given each year to the Outstanding Track Official of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Bob Neff was an active and devout member of First Baptist Church; he was baptized there in 1939 and served faithfully for many years; and

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

WHEREAS, Robert Neff Sr. enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of sixty years, Elizabeth "Bibby" Edmonds Neff, and was the proud father and father-in-law of Robert "Bobby" Lee Neff Jr., Jayne and John Gipson, and Patti Neff Gray; and

WHEREAS, he will be sorely missed by his grandchildren, Tyler Neff, Jenna Gitschlag, Burt Gipson, Allie Gipson Conway, Nick Gipson, Tate Gray, and Kyndal Gray, and his great-grandchildren, Greer Gitschlag, Sydney Burluson, and Rece Burluson; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Neff is also survived by his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Richard and Jackie Edmonds, several nieces and nephews, and his best four-legged walking friend, Bailey; and

WHEREAS, Bob Neff 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 SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Robert Neff Sr., 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. Neff.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.