

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION designating the Jim and Mary Jo Sharpe Memorial
2 Bridge in Pulaski County.

3 WHEREAS, James Edgar "Jim" Sharpe was born on January 21, 1930, in Somerset,
4 Kentucky, to Rector "Rex" and Agnes Amanda Gregory Sharpe; and

5 WHEREAS, Mary Jo Murphy Sharpe was born on August 1, 1931, in Somerset,
6 Kentucky, to Charlie and Edna Phelps Murphy; and

7 WHEREAS, in high school, Jim Sharpe was an All-State linebacker for the
8 Somerset Briar Jumpers, excelling in such a manner that he would later be inducted into
9 the Somerset High School Briar Jumper Hall of Fame; and

10 WHEREAS, as a young adult, Jim Sharpe enlisted in the United States Navy to
11 serve his nation during World War II; and

12 WHEREAS, following his return home after serving overseas, Jim Sharpe opened
13 Sharpe Marine in 1949, where he sold boats, motors, and trailers to boaters visiting the
14 newly-created Lake Cumberland; and

15 WHEREAS, Jim and Mary Jo Sharpe married at First Baptist Church of Somerset
16 on April 4, 1950, and they would go on to have four children together, Sherry (Frankie)
17 Girdler, Chip (Connie) Sharpe, Joe (Debbie) Sharpe, and Jami (Brent) Fothergill; and

18 WHEREAS, following North Korea's invasion of South Korea and the United
19 States' pledged involvement, Jim Sharpe once again enlisted to serve the United States
20 Navy; and

21 WHEREAS, while serving in Korea, Jim Sharpe took note of the design of the M-
22 Boats used for naval transit, pinpointing its design as a potential starting point for a new
23 type of boat to be used for leisure on lakes such as Lake Cumberland; and

24 WHEREAS, after returning to Somerset from Korea, Jim Sharpe began drafting his
25 own design for the first-ever houseboat, a 10-foot by 24-foot steel hull flat-bottom boat
26 with a scow bow, which he finished building in 1953; and

27 WHEREAS, following his invention of the houseboat and the subsequent

1 nationwide attention, Jim Sharpe expanded his business in 1959; and

2 WHEREAS, Jim Sharpe founded Somerset's first youth football program and, along
3 with his brother, Bill, built and helped open Somerset's first public swimming pool, The
4 Hillcrest; and

5 WHEREAS, Jim and Mary Jo Sharpe would then decide in 1974 to jointly purchase
6 Burnside Marina, which they would manage until they sold the property in the early
7 1980s; and

8 WHEREAS, Jim and Mary Jo Sharpe's next business venture was the purchase of
9 Somerset Houseboats, which they successfully operated until they sold it in 1996; and

10 WHEREAS, as a public recognition of his contributions to the local area, in 2000
11 the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce presented Jim Sharpe with the Distinguished
12 Community Service Award; and

13 WHEREAS, in 2005, *Houseboat Magazine* recognized Jim Sharpe as "Mr.
14 Houseboat," marking the 50-year anniversary of his invention; and

15 WHEREAS, following the sale of Somerset Houseboats, Jim and Mary Jo Sharpe
16 heavily supported and invested in the founding of Sharpe Houseboats, which would later
17 be operated by Jim's sons, sons-in-law, and grandson until its closure in 2012; and

18 WHEREAS, Jim and Mary Jo Sharpe were lifelong members of First Baptist
19 Church of Somerset, where Jim was instrumental in the building of the church's sanctuary
20 and Mary Jo taught girls' Sunday School classes; and

21 WHEREAS, despite Jim and Mary Jo Sharpe's bountiful business successes, their
22 true sense of pride came from the love shared between them and their caring family,
23 especially their grandchildren, who affectionately referred to them as "Pop" and "Mim";
24 and

25 WHEREAS, Mary Jo Murphy Sharpe passed away on July 8, 2008, and is buried in
26 the Somerset City Cemetery; and

27 WHEREAS, James Edgar "Jim" Sharpe passed away on October 14, 2021, and is

1 buried in the Somerset City Cemetery alongside his late wife; and

2 WHEREAS, in recognition of Jim and Mary Jo's contributions to the flourishing of
3 their family and the local Somerset community, it is appropriate that their lives be
4 memorialized in some tangible way;

5 NOW, THEREFORE,

6 ***Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

7 ➔Section 1. The Transportation Cabinet shall designate the bridge on United
8 States Route 27 in Pulaski County, crossing Pitman Creek (Bridge ID #100B00107L and
9 #100B00032R), as the "Jim and Mary Jo Sharpe Memorial Bridge" and shall, within 30
10 days of the effective date of this Resolution, erect signs denoting this designation.