

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 636

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Jesse Wilburn of Shelby County.

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body were greatly saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Jesse Wilburn; and

WHEREAS, Jesse Wilburn 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, a longtime resident of Shelby County, Mr. Wilburn was a highly respected member of the Orange Mound community; and

WHEREAS, in the 1950s, Jesse Wilburn was a star running back for the Melrose High School football team, which competed in the Negro Prep League. During his senior year, Mr. Wilburn and his teammates went undefeated and won one of the two segregated state titles; and

WHEREAS, Jesse Wilburn enrolled at Tennessee State University (TSU), where he played on the school's football team. During his time at TSU, Mr. Wilburn led the team in rushing from 1955 to 1957, and he set records for the longest scoring run from scrimmage at 89 yards and the longest kickoff return at 100 yards; and

WHEREAS, Jesse Wilburn and the TSU Tigers had undefeated seasons in 1954, 1956, and 1957. Most notably, in 1956, TSU played undefeated Florida A&M University in the Orange Blossom Classic at the Orange Bowl; playing both offense and defense for his team, Mr. Wilburn helped secure the victory, with a final score of 41 to 39; and

WHEREAS, it is said that Jesse Wilburn played with such grit and determination that trainers had to cut him out of his jersey at the end of the game because he could no longer lift his arms; and

WHEREAS, Jesse Wilburn was described as "a perfect athlete" by Willye B. White, a five-time Olympic long jumper and member of TSU's Tigerbelle Track Club; and

WHEREAS, from 1959 to 1968, Jesse Wilburn coached running backs, defensive backs, and wide receivers at Melrose High School with acumen and alacrity, in which position he earned the respect of his players and fellow coaches; and

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

WHEREAS, Jesse Wilburn enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Margaret Wilburn, and was the proud father of Barry Wilburn and Kelvin Wilburn; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wilburn 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 legislative body should remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Jesse Wilburn, 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 Jesse Wilburn.

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