

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1113

By Stevens

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Representative Don Ridgeway of Paris.

WHEREAS, we were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of our former colleague Representative Don Ridgeway of Paris; and

WHEREAS, a nine-term member of the House of Representatives, Don Ridgeway ably represented the good people of Henry, Benton, Stewart, Houston, and part of Dickson counties during his illustrious tenure in the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, he served as chair of the House Transportation Committee and the House Conservation and Environment Committee and sponsored a great deal of important legislation; and

WHEREAS, Representative Ridgeway passed legislation to combat odometer fraud in motor vehicles and to name the Ned Ray McWherter Bridge, and he was a leader in the redistricting process; and

WHEREAS, he worked with purpose and conviction to secure funding for the construction of the State Route 218 bypass around Paris and the expansion to four lanes of U.S. Highway 79 from McKenzie through Paris and across Kentucky Lake to Dover; and

WHEREAS, Don Ridgeway served his party as House Majority Caucus Chair and was a delegate to the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, after leaving the General Assembly, Don Ridgeway served as Director of the Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council for twenty-one years and was always referred to as "Mr. Don" by his colleagues; and

WHEREAS, a licensed funeral director at his family's funeral home, he gave back to his community as Chairman of the Henry County Board of Education and through his membership

in the Optimist Club, Rotary, Masons, and Shriners; he received numerous awards and accolades during his lifelong career of service to others; and

WHEREAS, Don Ridgeway was a longtime voting member of the Country Music Association, and because of his love for music, he helped promote many colleagues in their music careers; and

WHEREAS, he was a proud graduate of the Grove High School Class of 1966; voted "Friendliest" by his classmates, Don Ridgeway exemplified this accolade throughout his entire life; and

WHEREAS, a 1970 graduate of The University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM), he earned a bachelor's degree in education with an emphasis in history and was a member of Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity; he later served as the UTM Alumni Council President; and

WHEREAS, Don Ridgeway taught reading and history at Grove Junior High School before going into the insurance business, working at Balch and Reynolds in Paris; and

WHEREAS, an avid golfer, he was a former member of Puryear Country Club and a fifty-year member of Paris Country Club; and

WHEREAS, Don Ridgeway was also an avid University of Tennessee Volunteers and Tennessee Titans supporter and held season tickets for both teams for many years; and

WHEREAS, the son of the late John T. Ridgeway and the late Lillie Ruth Call Ridgeway, Mr. Ridgeway loved the idiosyncrasy of his leap day birthday on February 29; and

WHEREAS, Don Ridgeway is survived by his wife of nearly fifty-five years, Mary Kate Penn Ridgeway; a son, John Penn (Melissa) Ridgeway; a brother, T. Leon (Carol) Ridgeway; grandsons, Walker Ridgeway and Jackson Ridgeway; and several other extended family members; and

WHEREAS, for eighteen years, Don Ridgeway was a vital member of this body, and his passing leaves a void in his community and this State that will not be easily filled; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of our former colleague Don Ridgeway, reflecting fondly upon his numerous contributions to good government in Tennessee and his legacy of effective public service in his community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and extend our condolences to Representative Ridgeway's family and many friends.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.