

SENATE RESOLUTION 172

By Gilmore

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Judge Thomas A. Wiseman, Jr., of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this legislative body were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Judge Thomas A. Wiseman, Jr., an outstanding public servant and jurist who faithfully discharged his duties on the bench for more than three decades; and

WHEREAS, born on November 3, 1930, in Tullahoma, Judge Wiseman earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from Vanderbilt University and a Master of Laws degree from the University of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, after serving his country for two years in the United States Army, he began his practice of law in Tullahoma in 1956; and

WHEREAS, from 1965 to 1969, he represented the good people of Coffee, Franklin, and Grundy counties in the House of Representatives; he served as Chairman of the Democratic caucus and played an integral role in the General Assembly's establishing of itself as a body independent of the executive branch; and

WHEREAS, in January 1971, Judge Wiseman assumed the position of State Treasurer, in which position he began a practice of investing idle funds of the State for both short- and long-term investing and earned more money with his investments than all previous treasurers of the State combined; and

WHEREAS, he resigned the office in 1974 to run in the Democratic Primary for Governor of Tennessee; after his unsuccessful race for governor, he returned to the practice of law, forming the firm of Chambers and Wiseman; during this period of his practice, he represented the financial industry of Tennessee in a successful effort to amend the Constitutional interest rate maximum so that it could be set by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, Thomas Wiseman was appointed United States District Judge for the Middle Tennessee District upon the recommendation of Senator Jim Sasser and nomination of President Jimmy Carter; and

WHEREAS, in his illustrious tenure on the bench, Judge Wiseman served on the Advisory Committee on Bankruptcy Rules of the Judicial Conference, 1984-1989, and was the Sixth Circuit elected representative to the Judicial Conference of the United States, 1997-2002, and a member of the Sixth Circuit pattern jury instructions committee from its inception in 1987 to 2012; and

WHEREAS, he served as Chief Judge of the Middle District from 1984 to 1991; taking senior status in 1995, he continued to hold court in Nashville, and he also accepted assignments to other districts where there was a shortage of judges, including the Eastern and Western Districts of Tennessee, the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky, the Western District of North Carolina, the Southern District of Ohio, and the Middle District of Florida; and

WHEREAS, Judge Wiseman presided over the desegregation of schools in Nashville from 1978 until settlement and unitary status declaration in 2004, in addition to the Tennessee Higher Education desegregation case for twenty-five years; and

WHEREAS, Judge Wiseman shared his considerable skills and law expertise with others in the classroom, teaching a business law class in the University of Tennessee extension school in Tullahoma and national, regional, and advanced courses in the National Institute of Trial Advocacy; he also served as an adjunct professor at Vanderbilt Law School for fifteen years and received the school's award for Distinguished Service; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman who appreciated the importance of good citizenship, Judge Wiseman gave back to his community as board member and vice president of Sister Cities of Nashville for many years and as a board member of the South Street Community Center and Westminster School; he was also a member of the Alumni Board of Vanderbilt Law School and a founding member of the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Judge Wiseman is survived by his wife of sixty-three years, Emily Matlack Wiseman; his son, Thomas A. (Janet) Wiseman III; his two daughters, Mary Wiseman (Dr. Richard) Rochester and Sarah Emily Wiseman; his grandchildren, Allison Wiseman (Davis)

Acker, Thomas A. (Olya) Wiseman IV, Madeline DeVine (Tyler) Wiseman, Katherine Virginia Wiseman, Rachel Emily Rochester, Rebecca Lynn (Ward) Pickens, and Jeremy Wiseman Senn; and his great-grandchildren, Elliot Acker, Ruby Acker, and Thomas A. Wiseman V; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas A. Wiseman, Sr., and Vera Poe Wiseman Simmons; his sisters, Seleta Wiseman Carter, Katherine Wiseman Walker, and Vera Poe Wiseman Archer; and his grandson, Daniel Wiseman Rochester; and

WHEREAS, during the course of his brilliant career, Judge Thomas Wiseman distinguished himself as a public servant and judge committed to the highest precepts of justice, and we should pay homage to his bountiful life; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of Judge Thomas A. Wiseman, Jr., reflecting fondly upon his steadfast service to the good people of Tennessee and his unswerving 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 Judge Wiseman.

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