

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 437

By Hill M

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of our colleague,
Tennessee Representative Ralph Yelton of
Kingsport.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Ralph Yelton, our friend and former colleague; and

WHEREAS, Representative Yelton 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 native of Bakersville, North Carolina, Ralph Yelton served with bravery and valor as a member of the United States Army, and was a veteran of both World War II and the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, Representative Yelton was a member of the 9th Infantry Division during World War II, and was awarded the Bronze Star in recognition of his service; and

WHEREAS, following his tour, Ralph Yelton worked as a welder in Detroit, a post he held until 1950, when he again entered into military service. He fought valiantly alongside his fellow soldiers in the 2nd Infantry during the Korean War, and was awarded the Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf Cluster in recognition of being wounded in the line of fire; and

WHEREAS, Representative Yelton was wounded in a firefight a thousand yards north of the Thirty-Eighth Parallel, taking a bullet to the spine, which left him paralyzed and exposed to enemy fire before his rescue; and

WHEREAS, following his return stateside, Ralph Yelton spent two years undertaking a period of rehabilitation, after which he moved to northeast Tennessee, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in economics and accounting from East Tennessee State University in 1962; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Yelton gained election to the Tennessee General Assembly in 1976 as the Representative of the 3rd House District. He served the needs of his district and his constituents over the course of the next fourteen years, and was a stalwart advocate for veterans in the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, among his many contributions as a legislator, Representative Yelton was instrumental in the establishment of a Korean War memorial in Nashville. He is remembered by his fellow legislators as a dedicated civil servant who worked well with members from both sides of the aisle, a hardworking legislator who possessed a great deal of common sense, and a veteran whose unwavering commitment to serving the needs of other veterans helped to make life better for countless Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, he was also a firm believer in the importance of community service, and he committed his time and energies to a number of civic organizations, including the Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He also rendered sterling service as the treasurer of the Sullivan County Democratic Party; and

WHEREAS, Representative Yelton 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 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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Representative Ralph Yelton, 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 Representative Yelton.

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