

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 886

By Borchert

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor Mary Cordelia Beasley-Hudson posthumously on being the first woman to vote in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially remember those past pioneers of our state who, through relentless courage, faith, and devotion, helped to improve the quality of life for their fellow citizens and for the future generations of our country; and

WHEREAS, Mary Cordelia Beasley-Hudson of Benton County was one such estimable pioneer who held the distinct honor of being the first woman to vote in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, on April 22, 1919, a mayoral election was held in Camden during which Mrs. Hudson, a renowned advocate of women's rights, made sure to be the first woman in line, and consequently, the first woman to vote in the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Amendment to the Constitution, which allowed women to vote, did not occur until the following year; and

WHEREAS, Benton County native Thomas C. Rye had been the previous Governor of Tennessee during which term he had made an impassioned plea to the 34th General Assembly to pass an amendment to the State Constitution to allow women's suffrage; since the Constitution of Tennessee prohibited women from voting, it was determined that the General Assembly could pass a limited act without violating the State Constitution; and

WHEREAS, on April 15, 1919, the General Assembly passed a limited suffrage act and newly elected Governor Albert H. Roberts signed the bill two days later; and

WHEREAS, on April 22, 1919, Mrs. Hudson was finally able to realize the success of her many years of hard-fought advocacy for women's rights by voting in the local election for Mayor of Camden; it was reported that she voted for the winner of that election; and

WHEREAS, a public-spirited citizen of the highest order, Mary Hudson was wholly committed to the noble cause of women's suffrage, and she should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor Mary Cordelia Beasley-Hudson posthumously for being the first woman to vote in Tennessee and for her many contributions to Benton County and this State, as we reflect fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

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