

By: Senator M. Johnson

## SENATE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

TO REMEMBER STEVE STEPHENS AND TO HONOR HIS  
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

### Subtitle

TO REMEMBER STEVE STEPHENS AND TO HONOR  
HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF  
ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, Mr. Steve Stephens, the only son of Allie and Owen Stephens, departed this life on Friday, January 29, 2021; and he was a life-long Christian, baptized at fourteen (14) years old and taught Bible classes to young people in high school; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens obtained his formal education at Newport High School, Castle Heights Military Academy, and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, where he was a member of Kappa Alpha Fraternity, but declared his "rite of passage" into the brotherhood of man in the United States Marine Corps; and as a decorated United States Marine Corps combat veteran, he earned three (3) battle stars while serving with the famed 1st Marine Division in Korea, was awarded the United States Marine Corps Expert Rifleman's medal, and was discharged as a Sergeant of Marines; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, Mr. Stephens and a select group of other former United States Marines were flown by the Korean government to Seoul where the President of the Republic of Korea awarded him and his comrades the Presidential Peace Medal, naming them Ambassadors of Peace for their service during the Korean Conflict; and his name is inscribed on the MacArthur Museum



of Arkansas Military History's Arsenal Walk and on the Arkansas Korean War Veterans Memorial in MacArthur Park; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens had a distinguished Masonic history that lasted over fifty (50) years after joining at the urging of his father, and earned him the DeMolay Legion of Honor, the Rainbow Grand Cross of Color, and the coveted 33rd degree; and

WHEREAS, his historical favorites in life were Robert E. Lee, Winston Churchill, and Ernest Hemingway, although his mother was indeed the strongest influence in his life and was as "gentle as a dove and as brave as a lioness. A true steel magnolia", he once said; and

WHEREAS, throughout his lifetime, Mr. Stephens was known for his distinctive voice that he used to narrate countless radio and television commercials, film documentaries, and video tributes; he started in radio in Newport, Arkansas, as "The Voice of The White River Valley" at KUBY; he was later the host and producer of "Steve's Show", a popular television program in the late 1950's and early 1960's that aired for almost a decade on the Little Rock CBS affiliate, and which first announced Santa Claus flying into the state on Christmas Eve as well as filming the first filmed tour of the Governor's Mansion; and during his television career, Mr. Stephens was voted "Arkansas's Top Television Personality; and

WHEREAS, he left television to become United States Senator John McClellan's special assistant in charge of media relations and later was elected founding vice president of the United States Senate Press Secretaries Association before returning to Arkansas and founding an advertising, public relations, and travel agency; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens later became a licensed investment banking principal, served as director of communications and later assistant to the chairman of the board of Stephens Inc., and was named President of Stephens Entertainment, Inc., in which he managed investments for various entertainment figures; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens maintained an interest in many professional, charitable, and community causes, including the founding of the Little Rock Motion Picture and Television Commission, the Mayor's Commission on Tourism, the Arkansas FBI Citizens Academy Foundation, the Arkansas Cancer Research Center Foundation Board, and the Vision of Hope Society; chairing the Keep Little Rock Beautiful Commission; creating newspaper columns; creating and endowing the "Golden Mike" award at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock; and becoming a member of the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences' Chancellor's Circle; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stephens was inducted into the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame and the Arkansas Walk of Fame, and was later appointed and reappointed to the Arkansas Entertainers' Hall of Fame Board by two (2) Governors; and he received a Citation of Excellence in 2010 from the House of Representatives that recognized his lifetime of achievement, and he loaned his personal papers, mementos, and memorabilia that year to the Arkansas Studies Institute; he had a book written about him entitled "Fate Has Been My Friend – The Life and Times of Steve Stephens"; in 2018, he was honored by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Mid-America Chapter with a lifetime achievement award honoring individuals who have represented the very best of television and have made a significant contribution to television; he was honored by a retrospective of his television and broadcasting career by the Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock; he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humanities Degree from Southwestern College in Oklahoma City; he was awarded the Jonas Salk Lifetime Achievement Award for his fund-raising efforts on behalf of the Arkansas Chapter of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation and the International Council of the Salk Institute, on whose international board he served for eleven (11) years; and he served as an Honorary Life Trustee of the March of Dimes Foundation; and

WHEREAS, being nothing if not a true renaissance man with an adventurous spirit, each year he would attempt something different – he rafted down the Colorado River; swam with sting rays in the Cayman Islands; climbed the Great Wall of China with his grandson Owen; acted in a motion picture; had dinner in the White House; lunched with Dr. Edward Teller, the father of the hydrogen bomb; interviewed countless entertainment luminaries;

helped start a cellular phone business in Vietnam; hiked the Swiss Alps; sailed the Aegean Sea through the Greek islands; realized a boyhood dream of standing on the Acropolis in Greece and viewing the Parthenon; watched the sunrise on the island of Bali; snorkeled in the Sea of Cortez; explored the sacred home of the Navajo Nation in Monument Valley; enjoyed photography, history, and tennis; and once rode in an eighteen-wheeler to the west coast, all in his continuing search for the next adventure; and he celebrated his 75th birthday by parasailing with his twelve-year-old granddaughter Stephanie in the Dominican Republic, his 78th birthday by helicoptering to a glacier in Alaska to dogsled with his youngest grandson Seth, and his 79th birthday by exploring with Seth Yellowstone National Park, Mount Rushmore, Little Bighorn Battlefield, and floating the Snake River through the Grand Tetons; and

WHEREAS, he had many friends and family who loved him for his wit, generosity, and kindness; a friend of his once said, "Saying Steve loved life is like saying Mother Teresa was a kind lady"; and Mr. Stephens often said that "Life was meant to be enjoyed, not endured"; and

WHEREAS, along with his parents, his son Stanton Owen preceded him in death, and he is survived by his beloved son Steele; his four (4) grandchildren, Owen, Sarah, Stephanie, and Seth; his three (3) great grandsons, Owen Josef, Hudson Wyatt, and Jacob Peter; and his great-granddaughter Georgia, all of whom loved their "Popi"; and he is also survived by his daughter-in-law Sherry; his former daughter-in-law Megan; his granddaughter-in-law Petra; and his treasured late-in-life partner, Belinda Shults,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the Senate remember Mr. Steve Stephens and honor his contributions to the State of Arkansas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the individual members of the Senate hereby express sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Steve Stephens, and upon

adoption of this resolution, an appropriate copy shall be provided to the family of Mr. Stephens by the Secretary of the Senate.