

By: Senators C. Tucker, J. Boyd, J. Bryant, Caldwell, L. Chesterfield, A. Clark, Crowell, B. Davis, Dees, J. Dismang, J. Dotson, J. English, Flippo, S. Flowers, Gilmore, K. Hammer, Hester, Hickey, Hill, Irvin, B. Johnson, M. Johnson, B. King, G. Leding, F. Love, M. McKee, R. Murdock, J. Payton, C. Penzo, J. Petty, Rice, Stone, G. Stubblefield, D. Sullivan, D. Wallace

SENATE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF DAVID PRYOR, FORMER GOVERNOR
OF ARKANSAS AND UNITED STATES SENATOR.

Subtitle

IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF DAVID PRYOR,
FORMER GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS AND UNITED
STATES SENATOR.

WHEREAS, on April 20, 2024, former Arkansas governor and United States Senator, David Pryor, passed away at his home in Little Rock, Arkansas, at the age of eighty-nine (89); and

WHEREAS, David Pryor was one (1) of the state's most beloved political figures and remained active in public service in the state long after he left office; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor was born in Camden, Arkansas, on August 29, 1934, and was a third generation Ouachita County resident, where his father, William Edgar Pryor, served as sheriff and his mother, Susan Hampton Newton Pryor, was the first woman ever to seek elected office in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor attended public schools in Camden, Arkansas, attended Henderson State Teachers College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and graduated from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1957; and



WHEREAS, along with his beloved wife Barbara, David Pryor founded and published the Ouachita Citizen, a weekly newspaper in Camden from 1957-1960; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1964, and was admitted to the Arkansas bar that same year; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor started his political career with his election to the Arkansas House of Representatives in 1960, representing Ouachita County, and served until 1966 when he was elected to the United States Congress after winning a special election to the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, during his time in the Arkansas House of Representatives, David Pryor gained a reputation as being interested in reforming the state's political system; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor focused on helping the elderly and went undercover to investigate nursing homes while serving in the United States House of Representatives from 1966 to 1973, with the Select Committee on Aging being created as a direct result of his efforts; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor was elected governor of Arkansas in 1974, where he continued the modernization of state government and appointed an unprecedented number of African-Americans and women to important positions; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor was elected to the United States Senate in 1978, where he won passage of a Taxpayer Bill of Rights in 1988, which expanded citizens' rights dealing with the Internal Revenue Service and was the legislation David Pryor considered the "cornerstone" of his congressional career; and

WHEREAS, in the United States Senate, David Pryor was known as a true statesman, exemplifying what it meant to be a colleague and approaching every person in the building, no matter their position, with the utmost humility

and respect, and also as a great legislator, with former United States Senator Harry Reid commenting upon his retirement that David Pryor was "the single most effective legislator" he had ever served with; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor did not seek reelection in 1996, and he retired from elective office at the end of his term in early 1997; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor remained active in public service after his retirement from the Senate in many ways, including serving:

- (1) Two (2) years as the inaugural dean of the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service;
- (2) Temporarily as the chair of the state Democratic Party in 2008;
- (3) On the University of Arkansas's Board of Trustees starting in 2009; and
- (4) Two (2) years as the Director of the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor's long-time colleague and dear friend, former United States Senator and Governor of Arkansas Dale Bumpers, often lovingly lamented that when Arkansas media typed out the name "David Pryor" that their keyboards automatically typed out, "the most beloved political figure in Arkansas"; and

WHEREAS, David Pryor is survived by:

- (1) His wife, Barbara Jean Lunsford, whom he married in 1957;
- (2) Three (3) sons, Mark, David, and Scott;
- (3) Four (4) grandchildren; and
- (4) One (1) great-grandson; and

WHEREAS, after spending more than half a century in public service, the impact of his loss has been felt by many current and former political leaders, with former President Bill Clinton commenting that David Pryor was "one of America's greatest advocates",

NOW THEREFORE,

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

THAT the Senate express sincere condolences to the family of David Pryor and commend his outstanding contributions to the State of Arkansas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption, a copy of this resolution shall be provided to the family of David Pryor by the Secretary of the Senate.