

By: Representatives Steele, F. Allen, Barnes, Joey Carr, Clowney, A. Collins, Dalby, Ennett, D. Garner, Gonzales Worthen, Henley, Holcomb, Hudson, McCullough, McGruder, J. Richardson, T. Shephard, M. Shepherd, Steimel, Warren, Wing

## HOUSE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF FORMER ARKANSAS ATTORNEY GENERAL, UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN, AND FORTY-THIRD GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS JAMES "JIM" GUY TUCKER FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE NATION AND TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

### Subtitle

IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF FORMER ARKANSAS ATTORNEY GENERAL, UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN, AND FORTY-THIRD GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS JAMES "JIM" GUY TUCKER FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE NATION AND TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, former Arkansas Attorney General, United States Congressman, and forty-third Governor of Arkansas James "Jim" Guy Tucker, formerly of Little Rock, passed away Thursday, February 13, 2025, at the age of eighty-one (81); and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker was born June 13, 1943, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, as one (1) of three (3) children, and in 1945 the family moved back to Arkansas where his parents had been born; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker was raised in a modest brick home on Stonewall Road in Little Rock in a neighborhood today known as the Heights, and where Tucker once recalled having seen horses and buggies tethered to a



"hitchin' rail" in front of the local hardware store; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker's paternal grandfather was the city marshal in El Dorado, his maternal grandfather was the White County Judge, and his father was a World War I veteran and an Arkansas state auditor and later manager of the state's Social Security system, and his mother was a college graduate who owned Merle Norman Cosmetics studios in central Arkansas in order to pay for her son's college education; and

WHEREAS, other formative experiences for former Governor Tucker included becoming an Eagle Scout, learning to play guitar, being a pole vaulter and a football player, and becoming involved in student affairs; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker was awoken from sleep on the night of March 31, 1960, when a B-47 bomber exploded in the air over Little Rock, killing three (3) crew members in addition to two (2) fatalities on the ground as the wreckage landed in the Hillcrest neighborhood, and this made a deep impression on the teenaged Tucker; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker attended Harvard University in Boston, Massachusetts, beginning in the autumn of 1961, a time during which Tucker was also diagnosed with the ulcerative colitis that would, years later, lead to colon cancer and the need for a liver transplant; and

WHEREAS, during the summer of 1963, former Governor Tucker worked for United States Senator John McClellan in Washington, D.C., and that summer Tucker met United States Attorney General Robert Kennedy and watched the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., give his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker graduated in the spring of 1964 from Harvard University with a bachelor's degree in government, then immediately joined the United States Marines, but he was discharged within three (3) months because of his increasingly serious health issues, so Tucker turned his focus to helping former Governor Winthrop "Win" Rockefeller during Rockefeller's campaign for governor; and

WHEREAS, in 1965 and 1967, former Governor Tucker went to Vietnam to cover the war as a journalist, corresponding with ABC News and several Arkansas newspapers, including the Arkansas Democrat; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, former Governor Tucker graduated from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville School of Law, having earned his Juris Doctorate while taking some time to teach at American University in Beirut, and he then went to work for the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock; and

WHEREAS, in March 1970, former Governor Tucker went undercover for thirty-six (36) hours as a prisoner at the Cummins Unit at the request of the Chair of the Board of Corrections and successfully uncovered elements of the corruption that was rumored to exist there at that time; and

WHEREAS, later in 1970, former Governor Tucker won the office of prosecuting attorney for Pulaski and Perry counties; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, former Governor Tucker was elected to the office of Attorney General of Arkansas, where he formed a commission to create Arkansas's criminal law; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, former Governor Tucker met teacher Betty Allen Alworth, married her in 1975, and treated her two (2) children "as his own children right from the get-go" according to his stepson, and he had two (2) more children with Alworth; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, former Governor Tucker was elected to the United States Congress and was appointed to the House Ways and Means Committee, the Social Security Subcommittee, and a special task force on welfare reform; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker returned to private practice in 1979 before running for Governor of Arkansas in 1982, losing to his personal friend and political rival William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, former Governor Tucker was elected Lieutenant

Governor, and then became acting Governor in 1991 as then-Governor William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton began his ultimately successful campaign to become President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, while former Governor Tucker was in office as Governor of the State of Arkansas, he worked diligently to improve Arkansas's prison system, signed into law the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993, and sought to increase money for education without raising taxes; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker was reelected as Governor in 1994, and Tucker eventually stepped down as Governor; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Michael Dale "Mike" Huckabee became Governor after former Governor Tucker stepped down, and Huckabee said of Tucker, "I will remember that we worked together when it was best for the state. . . I had great respect for his overcoming many health challenges so he could continue to serve the state he truly loved"; and

WHEREAS, former President of the United States William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton said of former Governor Tucker, "Jim Guy was a good and honorable man and a good citizen who bore life's setbacks, including his health challenges, with dignity and determination"; and

WHEREAS, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders said of former Governor Tucker, "Jim Guy was part of a generation of larger-than-life Arkansans who dominated Arkansas's political life when I was growing up and had an immeasurable impact on our state"; and

WHEREAS, Representative Tracy Steele worked on former Governor Tucker's staff, and Representative Steele described former Governor Tucker as "a good man to work for"; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker was known for his charisma and intelligence, both of which enabled him to work well with both parties during his many years of service as a political leader; and

WHEREAS, while former Governor Tucker was committed to improving the lives of all Arkansans, he was also well-known for being a devoted father, grandfather, mentor, and friend; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker is survived by his wife, Betty Allen Tucker, stepson Lance Alworth, Jr., stepdaughter Kelly Driscoll, and daughters Anna Ashton and Sarah Tucker,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives remember former Arkansas Attorney General, United States Congressman, and forty-third Governor of Arkansas James "Jim" Guy Tucker for his service to the nation and to the State of Arkansas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption, a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of former Governor James "Jim" Guy Tucker by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives.