

By: Representative Barker

HOUSE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

TO REMEMBER LAWRENCE ERVIN BEARDEN AND TO RECOGNIZE
HIS LIFETIME OF DEDICATION TO HIS FAMILY AND
COMMUNITY, THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, AND THE NATION.

Subtitle

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OF ARKANSAS, AND THE NATION.

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden, formerly of Smackover, Arkansas, passed away on Monday, February 3, 2025, at the age of eighty-six (86); and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden was born in Chidester, Arkansas, on April 14, 1938, to Walter and Ruby Bearden, and he graduated from Fairview High School before earning a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Southern State College (now Southern Arkansas University) in Magnolia in 1961; and

WHEREAS, during his time at Southern State College, Lawrence Ervin Bearden served as President of the Student Government Association and was an active member of the Wesley Foundation, where he met Ann Oliver, the love of his life; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden and Ann Oliver married in 1961 and shared sixty-three (63) years of devoted marriage; and



WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden honorably served in the United States Army Reserve, completing Basic Infantry Training at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1957, and later commanding the 238th Transportation Company of Camden and the 458th United States Army Research Laboratory Stock Control Company of El Dorado; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden retired from the United States Army Reserve as a Lieutenant Colonel after twenty-eight (28) years of service; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden had a distinguished career in the oil industry, working for BHP as a production foreman and later as an independent producer, contributing to the economic growth of Arkansas for more than four (4) decades; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden was a passionate advocate for education, serving twelve (12) years on the Smackover School District's Board of Directors, including serving as President of the Smackover School District's Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden later served four (4) terms on the Southern Arkansas University Foundation's Board of Governors, including three (3) years as Chair of Southern Arkansas University Foundation's Board of Governors; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, former Governor Asa Hutchinson appointed Lawrence Ervin Bearden to the Board of Trustees of Southern Arkansas University, where he played a key role in advancing the university during a period of significant growth, including the construction of new residence halls, the President's House, the Poultry Education Facility, and the renovation of the Alumni Center at both Southern Arkansas University and Southern Arkansas University Tech; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden's generosity and commitment to education led to the establishment of an endowment for the Southern Arkansas University band program, resulting in the naming of the band hall in honor of his father-in-law, Richard O. Oliver, Southern Arkansas University's first

band director; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden was appointed to the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and Adult Education Study Committee by former Governor Michael Dale "Mike" Huckabee in 2005 and was reappointed in 2008 by Governor Mickey Dale "Mike" Beebe, demonstrating his lifelong commitment to workforce development and economic progress in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden was deeply involved in his community, serving as president of the Smackover Jaycees, the Smackover Library Board of Trustees, and the Board of Administration at Smackover First United Methodist Church, where he was also a Sunday school teacher, certified lay speaker, and president of the Education Board; and

WHEREAS, his unwavering faith and compassion led him to participate in six (6) mission trips to Haiti, where he worked to improve the lives of those in need; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden was a loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather who is survived by his wife, Ann Oliver Bearden, his sons, Richard (Shirley) Bearden and Mark Bearden, his grandchildren, Ashley (Alex) Campbell, Jordan (Tyler) Bearden, and James (Anna) Bearden, his great-granddaughter, Aubrey Campbell, his sister, Linda (Dick) Mosley, and many extended family members and friends who cherished his presence; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden was preceded in death by his son, David Bearden, his parents, Walter and Ruby Bearden, and his brothers, Frank Bearden and Larry Bearden; and

WHEREAS, Lawrence Ervin Bearden's legacy of leadership, service, and integrity will endure for generations to come;

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 Lawrence Ervin Bearden and recognize his lifelong commitment to public service, education, economic development, and faith, as well as his invaluable contributions to the State of Arkansas and the nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption, a copy of this resolution be provided to the family of Lawrence Ervin Bearden by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives as an expression of the General Assembly's deepest condolences and highest esteem.