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SENATE 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 their native Arkansas; 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, 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 at the early age of twelve (12), learning to play guitar, being a pole vaulter and a football player, becoming involved in student affairs, and working long hours during summers in high school paving Little Rock roads; 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, while a student at Harvard, former Governor Tucker observed that the United States military was becoming more deeply involved in Vietnam, and he therefore served as a member of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps,

accelerated his studies, graduated from Harvard a year ahead of schedule in 1964 with a degree in government, and proceeded straight to boot camp in hopes of serving overseas as a Marine; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker regretted that he was discharged within three (3) months of enlisting because of his increasingly serious health issues, and he promptly returned home to Arkansas to work for former Governor Winthrop "Win" Rockefeller in Rockefeller's campaign for Governor of Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, not letting his health prevent him from serving his country in Vietnam, former Governor Tucker made his way by ship from San Francisco to Japan, South Korea, and Thailand, finally traveling over land into Vietnam, where he found work with various news outlets as a war correspondent; and

WHEREAS, often armed and traveling with American platoons, former Governor Tucker covered the combat at close range, where he met, photographed, and interviewed many service members from Arkansas, detailing their stories of service, survival, and sacrifice in a book called "Arkansas Men at War"; and

WHEREAS, during his time in Vietnam, former Governor Tucker corresponded 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 only two (2) years as prosecuting attorney, former Governor Tucker oversaw the prosecution of more than one thousand (1,000) backlogged felony cases inherited from previous administrations, and, in an act ahead of his time, conducted scientific testing to determine the sources polluting the Arkansas River before prosecuting the polluters; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, former Governor Tucker was elected to the Office of Attorney General of Arkansas at age twenty-nine (29), where he spearheaded a broad revision of Arkansas's criminal laws, enacting the criminal code in a statutory scheme for the first time in Arkansas's history; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, former Governor Tucker met teacher Betty Allen Alworth, knew within weeks that he wanted to marry her, 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 Betty; 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 was a shining star of his Congressional class; 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, where he shepherded Arkansas through an important time of transition, serving as acting Governor while then-Governor William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton ran his campaign to become President of the United States, and ultimately assuming the Office of Governor in December 1992 after former President Clinton had been elected to the Office of President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker was reelected as Governor in 1994 with

nearly sixty percent (60%) of the vote, carrying seventy-three (73) of Arkansas's seventy-five (75) counties; 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, after serving as Governor of Arkansas, former Governor Tucker excelled in international business, particularly in Asia, where he also established a Hong Kong fundraising arm for Heifer International, developed sustainable agricultural projects that lifted rural communities out of poverty, and even found time to sing and play guitar for Arkansas expats living in or visiting Hong Kong; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Tucker pursued a host of exciting activities in his personal time, piloting planes, rafting rivers, sailing, diving, hunting, fishing, and camping, including highlights of once waking up in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming to find himself gazing into the nostril of a curious moose, scuba diving off of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, and visiting Komodo Island in Indonesia for an up-close look at the eponymous dragons; and

WHEREAS, in his later years, former Governor Tucker enjoyed supporting younger Arkansans drawn to politics and public service, serving as a generous, selfless, and faithful mentor to many whom he believed would carry on his life's mission of serving the state he so loved; and

WHEREAS, former Governor Michael Dale "Mike" Huckabee said of former Governor 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, 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 SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the Senate 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 Secretary of the Senate.