

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 216

By Brooks H

A RESOLUTION to recognize Dr. Richard G. Rhoda on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of industry; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Richard G. Rhoda is one such person, who served with probity from 1997 until 2015 as the executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and recently embarked upon a well-earned retirement; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary career as a higher education administrator, Dr. Rhoda has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to his community and this State; and

WHEREAS, a native of Suffern, New York, Richard Rhoda is an alumnus of Vanderbilt University, from which he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in history, a Master of Arts degree in education, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in higher education administration; and

WHEREAS, he began his estimable term of service with the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) in 1973 as a research associate and advanced through a number of positions, including those of executive assistant to the chancellor and vice chancellor for administration, among other leadership roles; and

WHEREAS, as TBR's vice chancellor for administration, Dr. Rhoda stood as the interim president of Nashville State Technical Institute, acting chancellor of TBR, and interim president of Austin Peay State University; and

WHEREAS, Richard Rhoda further served in a range of administrative capacities at Tennessee State University from 1985 until 1990, and was the assistant director of the Peabody Center for Education Policy at Vanderbilt University from 1995 until 1997; and

WHEREAS, under his astute leadership as the executive director of THEC, the commission emerged as one of the leading higher education policy boards in the nation, with Dr. Rhoda overseeing the development of both the HOPE scholarship program and the Tennessee Promise program, as well as a successful articulation and transfer policy, an outcomes-based funding formula, and numerous other public policy initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Richard Rhoda was also highly effective in his role as executive director of the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation, a position he accepted in 2008; and

WHEREAS, moreover, in 2007, Dr. Rhoda joined the faculty at Vanderbilt University and taught doctoral-level courses on public finance and public policy of higher education; and

WHEREAS, an active and dynamic member of his profession, Richard Rhoda is a valued member of the Southern Regional Education Board; the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association; the Education Commission of the States, for which he stood as treasurer; and the Center for Nonprofit Management, for which he served as chairman of the board; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rhoda is also the chairman of the board of the Elephant Sanctuary of Tennessee, and also contributes his time and numerous talents to the Downtown Nashville Rotary Club and the Leadership Nashville Alumni Association; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, this devoted professional is a recipient of the Otis T. Floyd Jr. Award for Excellence in Administration from the Tennessee College Public Relations Association; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Richard Rhoda is perhaps proudest of the love and support he shares with his wife, Nancy. They are the proud parents of two adult children, Meredith and Nicholas, and the doting grandparents of their granddaughter, Caroline; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Rhoda is also a lifelong baseball enthusiast who revels in the success of the New York Yankees while waiting expectantly for the Mets to become relevant once again; and

WHEREAS, Richard Rhoda exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Dr. Rhoda has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we extend to Dr. Richard G. Rhoda our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement, as we pay tribute to his exemplary tenure as executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction, and extend to him our best wishes for every continued success and happiness in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.