

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 34

Senator Shirkey offered the following concurrent resolution:

1 A concurrent resolution of tribute offered as a memorial for
2 Joanne Emmons, former member of the House of Representatives and
3 the Senate.

4 Whereas, It was with great sorrow that the members of the
5 Michigan Legislature learned about the passing of Joanne Emmons.
6 She will be remembered as an exceptional public servant who
7 tirelessly advocated for her constituents in Mecosta County and the
8 surrounding area; and

9 Whereas, Joanne Emmons was born in 1934 on the family farm.
10 After graduating as valedictorian from Mecosta High School in 1952,
11 she went on to obtain a bachelor's degree in home economics from
12 Michigan State University in 1956. She married John Emmons that
13 summer and began her lengthy career as a public servant shortly
14 thereafter. After she taught home economics at her high school alma

1 mater for three years, she later became Deputy Treasurer for Big
2 Rapids Township. Joanne Emmons successfully ran for treasurer of
3 Big Rapids Township, where she served for ten years. She
4 volunteered with many organizations including Mecosta Farm Bureau,
5 Area Agency on Aging Advisory Board, St. Peter's School Board and
6 Council, Mecosta County Right to Life, Michigan Maple Syrup
7 Association, Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce, Mt. Pleasant
8 Area Chamber of Commerce, Christian Women's Club, and the Omicron
9 Nu Honor Society. During that time, she also held leadership
10 positions in several organizations, including Chair of the Mecosta
11 County Republican Party, member of the board of directors of the
12 Michigan Townships Association, member of the Michigan Municipal
13 Treasurer's Association, Chair of the Big Rapids Township
14 Sesquicentennial, and Secretary of the Central Michigan Mental
15 Health Board. In 1987, she began her first of five terms with the
16 Michigan Legislature; and

17 Whereas, Joanne Emmons completed two terms in the House of
18 Representatives, followed by three terms in the Senate. During her
19 time in the House, she served as minority vice chair of the House
20 Committee on Colleges and Universities, as well as a member of the
21 House committees on Elections; Senior Citizens and Retirement;
22 Taxation; and Civil Rights. During her time in the Senate, she held
23 leadership positions on many committees, including the Senate
24 committees on Mental Health, Human Resources, and Senior Citizens;
25 Technology and Energy; Finance; Labor; Government Operations;
26 Education; and Financial Services, in addition to serving on the
27 Legislative Retirement Board of Trustees; Legislative Council;
28 Joint Committee on Administrative Rules; and the committees on
29 Reapportionment and Banking and Financial Institutions. Notably,

1 Senator Emmons broke several glass ceilings when she became the
2 first woman to chair the Senate Finance Committee and became the
3 first woman to serve as Senate Majority Floor Leader. Senator
4 Emmons also served as Senate Majority Whip; and

5 Whereas, After retiring from the Senate, Joanne Emmons
6 continued to serve her community in a variety of capacities. She
7 took a prominent role as the chair of the board of directors at the
8 Russell Kirk Center, where she focused on sharing and expanding
9 conservative thought. She also continued her work with Michigan
10 Right to Life, advocating for the rights of the unborn. Joanne
11 Emmons was also able to spend time doing activities she loved:
12 traveling, enjoying her family, and gardening; and

13 Whereas, Joanne Emmons, described by her former colleagues as
14 a remarkable stateswoman, leaves behind a legacy as a highly
15 respected and effective legislator. Throughout her career, she
16 sponsored bills on a wide variety of topics, and was particularly
17 influential in changing Michigan's tax law. Though she stayed true
18 to her conservative values, Joanne Emmons was also known for being
19 adept at working with legislators across the political spectrum.
20 Her unwavering dedication to her constituents, fierce work ethic,
21 senses of humor and fairness, and ability to mentor others remain
22 an example of what it takes to be a successful public servant; and

23 Whereas, Upon her passing, we offer condolences to her family
24 and friends. We hope they take comfort in the knowledge that her
25 contributions will long continue to enrich the people of this
26 state; now, therefore, be it

27 Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives
28 concurring), That we offer this expression of our highest tribute
29 to honor the memory of Joanne Emmons, a member of the House of

1 Representatives from 1987 to 1990 and the Senate from 1991 to 2002;
2 and be it further

3 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
4 Emmons family as evidence of our lasting esteem for her memory.