

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 241

By Tracy

A RESOLUTION to designate Margaret "Maggi" Britton Vaughn as Poet Laureate of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Margaret Britton Vaughn of Bell Buckle, Tennessee, is an inspirational poet and one of the most distinguished interpreters of the rural South; and

WHEREAS, Maggi Vaughn (the name by which she is known) has served with distinction as Poet-in-Residence for the Tennessee Arts Education program; and

WHEREAS, in this and numerous other capacities, she has made a major contribution to education by teaching students, from kindergarten to university graduate level, across the United States; and

WHEREAS, Maggi Vaughn's natural talent assures her appeal to audiences of all ages and backgrounds, and she has been recognized as the leading contemporary Tennessee poet on the public television program *Tennessee Crossroads*; and

WHEREAS, a Murfreesboro native, Maggi Vaughn's first critically acclaimed book, *Fifty Years of Saturday Nights*, was published in 1975; and

WHEREAS, her eight other outstanding books include *Grand Ole Saturday Nights*, a revision of her first book; *The Light in the Kitchen Window*, *Kin*, *Acres That Grow Stones*; and *Life's Down to Old Women's Shoes*; and

WHEREAS, widely recognized as a singular literary talent, Maggi's wonderful poetry has appeared in many distinguished magazines, journals, and newspapers and has been read on national television and radio; and

WHEREAS, Maya Angelou once visited with Maggi to talk about her exploits; and

WHEREAS, Maggi Vaughn is the highly revered author of the official Bicentennial Poem of Tennessee, "Who We Are," and the official poem commemorating the Tennessee state quarter; and

WHEREAS, legendary newsman Bill Moyers of PBS has sought her counsel; and

WHEREAS, she also penned the official poem for the gubernatorial inauguration in 2000, and her exceptional poem commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United States Air Force has been read into the *Congressional Record*; and

WHEREAS, Maggi Vaughn's crowning achievement came when she was named Poet Laureate of Tennessee in 1995 by House Joint Resolution No. 133 of the Ninety-Ninth General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Vaughn's tenure was extended to April 1, 2000, by House Joint Resolution No. 404 of the Ninety-Ninth General Assembly; she was reappointed Poet Laureate for a term to expire April 1, 2005, by House Joint Resolution No. 101 of the One Hundred First General Assembly; she was reappointed Poet Laureate for a term to expire April 1, 2010, by House Joint Resolution No. 966 of the One Hundred Third General Assembly; and she was reappointed Poet Laureate for a term to expire April 1, 2015, by Senate Joint Resolution No. 711 of the One Hundred Sixth General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, in fulfilling her duties as Poet Laureate of Tennessee, Ms. Vaughn has traveled several hundred thousand miles throughout this State and nation, and her work has been taught at many colleges and universities across this great land; and

WHEREAS, a popular keynote speaker, Maggi reads her poetry and tells captivating southern stories to appreciative audiences at literary festivals, civic gatherings, business conventions, academic conferences, churches, and libraries; and

WHEREAS, she ably represented Tennessee at the first National Poets Laureate Conference held in New Hampshire in 2003 and was prominently featured and quoted in the *New York Times* coverage of this prestigious event; and

WHEREAS, Maggi Vaughn holds the distinction of being the first poet to receive a Mark Twain Fellowship from the Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies; and

WHEREAS, her inspiring poems reverberate with the magical incantatory power of family and roots; as she says, "Poetry is for everyone and we need to keep alive the message that is understood by all walks of life"; and

WHEREAS, Maggi strongly believes in the power of the written word, and, despite her busy schedule, she devotes much of her time to encouraging, helping, and promoting promising writers of all ages; and

WHEREAS, in appreciation of her superior literary talents and her unwavering dedication and many contributions to her native State, Ms. Vaughn was honored with the Governor's Outstanding Tennessean award in 2003; and

WHEREAS, she has also been inducted into the Germantown Arts Alliance Writers Hall of Fame, alongside such dignitaries as John Grisham, Shelby Foote, and Eudora Welty; and

WHEREAS, this distinguished Tennessee bard is renowned as a "Poet of the People" whose writings have a unique ability to evoke laughter and tears simultaneously, and her writings have inspired and enthralled a wide variety of readers and listeners; and

WHEREAS, it is now time for this eminent poet and Tennessee treasure to be reappointed to the august office in which she has served so faithfully and so well; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that in recognition and appreciation of her numerous contributions to southern poetry, her illustrious and proficient tenure as this State's Poet Laureate, and her many other laudable endeavors in service of Tennessee, Margaret "Maggi" Britton Vaughn is hereby designated Poet Laureate of Tennessee for a term to expire April 1, 2020.

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