

HOUSE RESOLUTION

A TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE WILBUR D. MILLS

WHEREAS, in 1934, at the age of 25, Wilbur Mills was elected County Judge of White County, becoming not only Arkansas' youngest County Judge, but the most highly educated, with four years at Hendrix College and three years at Harvard Law School; and

WHEREAS, his campaign promise was simple -- he would pay off the County's debts, balance the budget, extend services, and not increase taxes during the first year of his term, or he would not accept a salary during his second year; and

WHEREAS, not only did he fulfill his campaign promises, he also developed a sizable surplus for the County while instituting a program for medical care for the needy resulting in his reelection without opposition in 1936; and

WHEREAS, in 1938, Mr. Mills was elected to Congress at the age of 29, and served there for the next 38 years, having opposition in only four of his eighteen reelection campaigns; and

WHEREAS, in 1942, he was assigned to the House Committee on Ways and Means, where all taxation measures for the country must originate; and

WHEREAS, in 1958, he became the youngest person ever elected Chairman of that Committee, and served as Chairman longer than anyone in our nation's history; and

WHEREAS, among his major achievements as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, were securing the Medicare/Medicaid program for the elderly, increasing Social Security benefits and extending coverage, and designing revenue sharing for cities and counties; and

WHEREAS, during his 38 years in Congress, Wilbur Mills always emphasized the importance in helping people in Arkansas which included assisting Arkansas communities with new water, sewer, military, and highway facilities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mills worked to have the Little Rock Air Force Base to become a reality and singlehandedly achieved Interstate status and funding for Little Rock's East-West Expressway, which was appropriately renamed the Wilbur Mills Freeway, and now bears the designation of Interstate Highway 630; and

WHEREAS, the East Belt Freeway, Interstate 440, one of the most expensive stretches of the Interstate system, would not exist today without the efforts of Congressman Mills, who worked to obtain 90% federal funding for this crucial artery connecting Little Rock's River Port to major highways; and

WHEREAS, even more than the concrete and steel of the capital projects he obtained for his home state, Arkansans knew that if they had a personal problem with the federal government, he would always be there ready to help whenever possible; and

WHEREAS, almost every family in his district was touched by his interceding on behalf of a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or parent; and

WHEREAS, helping veterans obtain their benefits, and assisting Arkansas to cut through the bureaucratic "red tape" were as important to him as developing a fiscal policy for the nation; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mills served alongside seven Presidents (Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford) and was known as "the second most powerful man in Washington"; and

WHEREAS, his distinguished 42-year public service career is the longest in Arkansas political history without the loss of a single election, and the longest in continuous service ever in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mills' leadership has been vigorous since his retirement from Congress eleven years ago, serving as Washington tax counsel to the New York law firm of Shea and Gould, representing major business and nonprofit corporations, and also serving as counselor, lecturer and fundraiser in behalf of alcohol and drug abuse awareness programs and projects,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SEVENTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS MEETING IN THIRD EXTRAORDINARY SESSION:

That the House of Representatives takes great pleasure in giving tribute to former Congressman Wilbur D. Mills for his 42 years of service to Arkansas and the United States of America.