

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.16

Senator Shirkey offered the following concurrent resolution:

1 A concurrent resolution of tribute offered as a memorial for
2 William Grawn Milliken, former governor and member of the Senate.

3 Whereas, The members of the Michigan Legislature were saddened
4 to learn of the passing of William G. Milliken. One of the great
5 leaders in Michigan history, he piloted our state through some of
6 its most difficult years with civility, integrity, and an unerring
7 belief in the ability of people to come together to solve
8 Michigan's most pressing problems; and

9 Whereas, A native of Traverse City, William Milliken was born
10 into a family of political and business leaders. The importance of
11 service, generosity, and hard work were instilled in his youth, as
12 well as a love of the outdoors, and would shape his future
13 endeavors. Upon graduation from Traverse City High School in 1940,
14 he attended Yale University, until he chose to bravely serve his

1 country in the U.S. Army Air Corps in World War II. Over his two
2 years of active service, he flew numerous dangerous missions as a
3 waist-gunner on B-24 bombers and was awarded a number of medals,
4 including a Purple Heart and an Air Medal. In 1945, he returned
5 stateside to marry the love of his life, Helen, and complete his
6 bachelor's degree. He returned to Traverse City and spent the
7 subsequent years running the family business, J.W. Milliken, Inc.,
8 serving on the Michigan Waterways Commission, and starting his
9 family, among other endeavors. In 1960, he followed in the
10 footsteps of his father and grandfather and was elected to serve in
11 the Senate for the first time; and

12 Whereas, As a member of the Senate, William Milliken began to
13 establish his place as a leading moderate voice in Michigan
14 politics. He stood up for civil rights and called for new programs
15 to promote tourism and agriculture, expand community colleges,
16 provide scholarships for high school graduates, address mental
17 illness, and increase local revenue. He worked to preserve scenic
18 beauty on highways by limiting billboards and sponsored legislation
19 to support education through parochial schools. He served as chair
20 of the Education Committee and the Veterans' Affairs Committee,
21 and, in his second term, was selected as majority floor leader. He
22 left the Senate upon his election as Governor George Romney's
23 lieutenant governor in 1964, an office he would hold for the next
24 five years; and

25 Whereas, William Milliken rose to the position of governor in
26 1969 following Governor Romney's appointment as United States
27 Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Over the next 14 years,
28 Governor Milliken would leave his mark on our state, establishing a
29 nationally recognized standard for effective leadership. At a time

1 of great unrest and deep economic crises in Michigan and our
2 nation, his basic decency, kindness, and charm allowed him to build
3 bipartisan alliances and solutions to Michigan's problems. Mild-
4 mannered and thoughtful, he made difficult decisions and pursued
5 policies on the environment, economy, civil rights, education,
6 urban revitalization, and many other issues that he believed would
7 benefit the state of Michigan and all of its citizens in the long
8 run. He left office as Michigan's longest-serving governor; and

9 Whereas, William Milliken remained an active and respected
10 figure and independent voice in the political landscape for decades
11 after he left office. He served on corporate and nonprofit boards
12 and commissions and remained a strong advocate for the Great Lakes,
13 criminal justice reform, and other issues; and

14 Whereas, William Milliken's life and legacy of service to our
15 state and its people will not soon be forgotten. An icon of
16 Michigan politics and a true statesman, he will be remembered as a
17 steadfast champion for the common good and the ability of
18 government to serve that good. May he rest in peace; now,
19 therefore, be it

20 Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives
21 concurring), That we offer this expression of our highest tribute
22 to honor the memory of William Grawn Milliken, a member of the
23 Senate from 1961 to 1964, lieutenant governor and president of the
24 Senate from 1965 to 1969, and governor from 1969 to 1982; and be it
25 further

26 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
27 Milliken family as evidence of our lasting esteem for his memory.