

SR-120, As Adopted by Senate, October 17, 2007

Senators Bishop and George offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 120.

A resolution offered as a memorial for Jerry Lawler.

Whereas, The members of this legislative body and virtually everyone who has worked with Jerry Lawler over the past nearly 40 years were saddened to learn of his passing. A man of unsurpassed integrity, energy, and enthusiasm for public service, Jerry Lawler exerted an impact on those who knew him every bit as impressive and unforgettable as the brilliant Capitol dome on a frosty Michigan night; and

Whereas, An Iowa farm boy who never strayed from the values of hard work and unselfishness, Jerry Lawler was a graduate of Drake University and a veteran of the United States Army. Prior to his arrival in Lansing in 1968, he had worked at the Iowa Legislative Service Bureau. With the Michigan Legislative Service Bureau, he set the highest standards of excellence in a nonpartisan role in his responsibilities in research and as an associate bureau director for many years. His unshakable belief in our system of government was clear in his work for hundreds of legislators; and

Whereas, In the late 1980s, as the move took root to restore Michigan's threatened Capitol from its years of overuse, the leadership of this state--the House, Senate, and Governor--turned to Jerry to manage the monumental task of restoring this Victorian-era gem for present and future generations. His masterful handling of this responsibility earned national acclaim for our state's most important public building. This undertaking, massive in scope and endless in details, could only have been achieved as successfully as it was with someone of Mr. Lawler's trustworthiness, talent, and sensitivity to history at the helm; and

Whereas, As head of the Legislative Council Capitol Facilities Agency and as executive director of the Michigan Capitol Committee, Jerry Lawler managed this building as if it were his alone, even as he took pride in sharing it with its 10 million other owners. In addition to overseeing the maintenance of what is essentially a 19th century edifice meeting 21st century demands, he was the point man handling countless demonstrations, ensuring that tensions and confrontations did not escalate while allowing controversial groups to have their say. "Freedom of speech" was no abstract concept to him; and

Whereas, Jerry Lawler never sought the spotlight; the focus of all he did was other people--legislators, policymakers, and visitors from all corners of our state and the world. In this, his public life mirrored his private life, for Jerry Lawler devoted himself to others in everything he did. This legacy, like the grand old building he worked so hard to restore, shall long endure; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we offer this expression of our highest tribute to honor the memory of Jerry Lawler, "Mr. Capitol"; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to Jerry's wife Connie and their family as evidence of our lasting esteem for his memory.