

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 24—ASSEMBLYMEN
CHOWNING, ANDERSON, ANDONOV, ANGLE, ARBERRY,
ATKINSON, BEERS, BROWN, BUCKLEY, CARPENTER,
CHRISTENSEN, CLABORN, COLLINS, CONKLIN, GEDDES,
GIBBONS, GIUNCHIGLIANI, GOICOECHEA, GOLDWATER,
GRADY, GRIFFIN, GUSTAVSON, HARDY, HETTRICK,
HORNE, KNECHT, KOIVISTO, LESLIE, MABEY, MANENDO,
MARVEL, MCCLAIN, MCCLEARY, MORTENSON,
OCEGUERA, OHRENSCHALL, PARKS, PERKINS, PIERCE,
SHERER, WEBER AND WILLIAMS

MAY 9, 2003

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SCHNEIDER, SHAFFER, TIFFANY, TITUS, TOWNSEND,
WASHINGTON AND WIENER

Read and Adopted

SUMMARY—Memorializes casino visionary and philanthropist
William Bennett. (BDR R-1052)

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets [omitted material] is material to be omitted.

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Memorializing
casino visionary and philanthropist William Bennett.

- 1 WHEREAS, The members of the Nevada Legislature join the
- 2 people of Nevada in mourning the loss of William Bennett, casino
- 3 visionary and philanthropist, who passed away on December 22,
- 4 2002; and
- 5 WHEREAS, William Bennett was born November 16, 1924, in
- 6 Glendale, Arizona, and after serving as a Navy dive-bomber pilot
- 7 during World War II, William Bennett returned home to Arizona
- 8 and built a chain of furniture stores which he sold in 1962; and
- 9 WHEREAS, Finding himself bankrupt when his investments were
- 10 mismanaged by an investment company, William Bennett bounced



1 back by using the opportunity to take his career in a different
2 direction when he was hired by the Del Webb Corporation, an
3 Arizona-based construction company that was expanding into casino
4 operations, and took great pride in the fact that he eventually repaid
5 all his creditors; and

6 WHEREAS, Transferring to the Sahara Tahoe in 1965, William
7 Bennett worked as a casino host at night and in various hotel
8 departments by day, learning the casino trade, and was quickly
9 promoted to manager of the Sahara Tahoe and later of the Mint,
10 reversing that casino's trend of losing \$2 million annually to making
11 \$9 million a year; and

12 WHEREAS, When William Bennett left Del Webb, he and long-
13 standing business partner, Bill Pennington, formed a slot-machine
14 leasing business and later leased the troubled Circus Circus in Las
15 Vegas, exercising the option to buy in 1983; and

16 WHEREAS, In contrast to most of the glamorous, glitzy, high-
17 rolling casinos in Las Vegas at that time, the new Circus Circus
18 added another dimension to the city, making its target demographic
19 the families of the Heartland of America, offering affordable rooms
20 and meals and a family-friendly atmosphere with circus activities
21 and arcades to entertain the children while keeping them out of the
22 gaming area; and

23 WHEREAS, In 1990, Circus Circus Enterprises, under William
24 Bennett's reign, opened the \$300 million Excalibur, followed by the
25 opening of the \$375 million Luxor in 1993, and the purchase of the
26 Sahara in 1995; and

27 WHEREAS, William Bennett, who had a longtime love of auto
28 racing, and Ralph Engelstad, owner of the Imperial Palace,
29 developed the \$200 million Las Vegas Motor Speedway, which
30 brought in a new type of tourist, the race fan; and

31 WHEREAS, While William Bennett's marketing genius made
32 him very successful, with *Forbes* magazine ranking him as one of
33 America's richest men, he avoided the public spotlight and preferred
34 to donate to various charities without seeking recognition, founding
35 the Bennett Foundation to contribute to the needs of his community;
36 and

37 WHEREAS, Much of William Bennett's generosity was directed
38 at employees of rival casinos, such as when he supplied 3 meals a
39 day 7 days a week for 5 years to striking workers of the Frontier and
40 when he made a generous donation to an association of employees
41 of the Aladdin after the casino was closed because of a management
42 dispute; and

43 WHEREAS, William Bennett was instrumental in the building of
44 the Temple Beth Shalom and, being an ardent animal rights activist,
45 also gave his support to many animal rights groups; and



1 WHEREAS, William Bennett had a special place in his heart for
2 education, donating more than \$10 million to the University of
3 Nevada, Las Vegas, to build the Lynn Bennett Early Childhood
4 Development Center and the William G. Bennett Professional
5 Development Building which will train teachers to better educate at-
6 risk students; and

7 WHEREAS, William Bennett is survived by his wife Lynn,
8 daughter Diana Bennett, son William A. Bennett of Las Vegas,
9 stepdaughter Laura Lynn Lucia of Euless, Texas, four grandchildren
10 and two great-grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE
12 SENATE CONCURRING, That the members of the 72nd Session of
13 the Nevada Legislature offer their sincere condolences to the family
14 and friends of William Bennett; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the effect of William Bennett's vision and
16 generosity will be felt for generations to come; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and
18 transmit a copy of this resolution to Lynn, the beloved wife of
19 William Bennett.

