

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31—Senators Raggio, Amodei, Beers, Care, Carlton, Cegavske, Coffin, Hardy, Heck, Horsford, Lee, Mathews, McGinness, Nolan, Rhoads, Schneider, Tiffany, Titus, Townsend, Washington and Wiener

Joint Sponsors: Assemblymen Perkins, Allen, Anderson, Angle, Arberry Jr., Atkinson, Buckley, Carpenter, Christensen, Claborn, Conklin, Denis, Gansert, Gerhardt, Giunchigliani, Goicoechea, Grady, Hardy, Hettrick, Hogan, Holcomb, Horne, Kirkpatrick, Koivisto, Leslie, Mabey, Manendo, Marvel, McClain, McCleary, Mortenson, Munford, Ocegüera, Ohrenschall, Parks, Parnell, Pierce, Seale, Sherer, Sibley, Smith and Weber

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Memorializing former Governor Mike O’Callaghan.

WHEREAS, Tracing the journey of a son born in Lacrosse, Wisconsin, into a poor family that lost its farm during the Great Depression, to become the man who is one of the most prominent, beloved figures in the history of the State of Nevada encompasses a story of extreme courage and remarkable character; and

WHEREAS, The leading actor in that story, Donal Neil “Mike” O’Callaghan, affectionately known as “Big Mike,” approached each role throughout his life in such a way that endeared him to all he knew, and his imprint will forever be stamped upon this State; and

WHEREAS, Former Governor Mike O’Callaghan grew up on his family’s farm and helped earn a living by raising cows and selling cream until, at the age of 16, he joined the Marine Corps and served in the U.S. Pacific Fleet as an anti-aircraft gunner, earning the rank of sergeant, and after his discharge in 1948, served in the Marine Corps Reserves until 1950; and

WHEREAS, As a young man, the former Governor was employed as an ironworker and participated in amateur boxing until he continued his military service by joining the Air Force as an intelligence officer, but because he wanted to see action, he transferred to the Army as an infantryman in 1952 and served in the Korean War, during which he lost the lower half of one leg after courageously rescuing soldiers who were cut off from the trenches by enemy action; and

WHEREAS, Following his military service, Mike graduated from the University of Idaho in Moscow, where he not only earned a master’s degree and graduated in the top 10 of his class, but also won the heart of Carolyn Randall, and the two were married on

August 25, 1954, and dedicated themselves to each other and their children during their marriage of almost 50 years; and

WHEREAS, Heeding his new wife's advice, Mike chose to accept a job as a teacher at Basic High School in Henderson, rather than a position as a principal in Idaho, and the family moved to Nevada in 1956; and

WHEREAS, Upon completion of 5 years of teaching, Mike continued his public service in municipal, state and federal positions from 1961 to 1969; and

WHEREAS, O'Callaghan was elected Governor of the State of Nevada in 1970 after waging a campaign in which he sought to get in touch literally with the "average man on the street" by greeting motorists on the corners of busy intersections in Las Vegas during blistering heat; and

WHEREAS, As Governor of this State for two terms, O'Callaghan continually fought for the "little man" and accomplished his goal of creating a government that was responsive to the needs of its people by promoting the welfare of disadvantaged children and the mentally ill, creating new agencies to assist senior citizens, consumers and the poor, actively working to preserve the beauty of Lake Tahoe, ensuring affordable housing for all, providing assistance to workers injured on the job and advocating for prison reform, rights for women and laws requiring motorcycle helmets; and

WHEREAS, There is little doubt that he could have won a third term as Governor, but instead he accepted an executive position with the *Las Vegas Sun*, where he became a popular columnist and an important voice in Nevada, and as Executive Editor, he acted as the conscience of the newspaper; and

WHEREAS, For his extraordinary courage, he was awarded multiple military medals, and a few of the other honors he attained include membership in the Hall of Fame at the University of Idaho, an award from the Nevada Judges Association, the selection by *Time* Magazine in 1974 as one of 200 promising young Americans, induction into the Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame, the David L. Simon Bridge Builder for Peace Award and the honor of being nominated shortly before his death to serve on the federal Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission; and

WHEREAS, Outside of the public eye, Mike O'Callaghan conducted himself with honor and compassion, never bringing attention to his quiet acts such as arriving early in the morning at homeless shelters to serve coffee and doughnuts to the poorest of the poor and frequently visiting hospitals to encourage recent amputees; and

WHEREAS, His devotion to the youth of this State inspired the lives of innumerable young people as he actively and ardently

supported children in sports throughout his life, took time as Governor to change lives of juvenile offenders by being instrumental in the building of China Spring Youth Camp in Douglas County and Spring Mountain Youth Camp in Las Vegas, and performed random acts of generosity such as graciously hosting, impromptu, in the Governor's Office, a basketball team of underprivileged boys from Hawthorne when they came to play in Carson City; and

WHEREAS, Possibly the most predominant thread intertwining the eulogies offered for former Governor Mike O'Callaghan was the mention that he never succumbed to developing an ego that could so easily have accompanied the prominence he attained, but continually dedicated himself to the service of others in every aspect of his daily life; and

WHEREAS, By the end of his journey, Mike O'Callaghan had become the epitome of the words of the novelist James Michener, who penned fictional sagas that can only rival the real-life story of this great man, a life "decently led and work well done"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the members of the 73rd Session of the Nevada Legislature express their admiration, respect and veneration for Donal Neil "Mike" O'Callaghan and empathize with the members of his family and all those who feel an emptiness as the result of his loss; and be it further

RESOLVED, That former Governor Mike O'Callaghan will never be forgotten by the people of the State of Nevada, and when he is remembered, the memories will be of a man who proved himself to be an icon to which all can aspire; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to Mike's beloved children, Michael O'Callaghan, Colleen O'Callaghan-Miele, Teresa Duke, Brian O'Callaghan and Tim O'Callaghan.

