

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 375

By Gardenhire

A RESOLUTION to commend Ardena J. Garth for her honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Ardena J. Garth is one such estimable person, who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Ardena J. Garth has served with distinction for twenty-four years as the District Public Defender for the 11th Judicial District serving Hamilton County; and

WHEREAS, a native of Chattanooga and the daughter of the late Reverend and Mrs. Nathaniel Garth Jr., Ardena J. Garth attended Chattanooga and Hamilton County public schools, graduating as Valedictorian of her class at Ooltewah High School; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Garth earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Middle Tennessee State University in 1978 and obtained her Doctor of Jurisprudence at the University of Kansas School of Law in 1981; and

WHEREAS, during her legal career, Ardena J. Garth has worked as an associate attorney with Hamilton County Attorney Rheubin McGhee Taylor, been associated in the practice of law with former Senator Ward Crutchfield, and operated a solo practice, during which time she served as an assistant attorney for Hamilton County; in 1987, she became the Assistant District Attorney/Special Prosecutor for Child Abuse Cases for Hamilton County; and

WHEREAS, on August 24, 1989, Ardena J. Garth was appointed by Governor Ned McWherter as the first District Public Defender for Hamilton County; she was elected to a full eight-year term on August 2, 1990, becoming the first African-American female elected to a countywide office, and she was reelected in 1998 and 2006; and

WHEREAS, recognized as a leader by her peers and colleagues, Mrs. Garth served as the president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Tennessee District Public Defenders Conference, as well as other committees for the Conference; and

WHEREAS, selflessly donating her time and sharing her legal knowledge, Mrs. Garth taught courses in constitutional law as an adjunct professor at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and served as an instructor in the Basic Trial Advocacy program for the Office of the Tennessee Attorney General; and

WHEREAS, highly respected for her keen insight and wisdom, Ardena J. Garth was a member of the Tennessee Indigent Defense Commission and the Commission on Ethnic and Racial Fairness for the Tennessee Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, Ardena J. Garth served as a board member of the Board of Governors of the Tennessee Bar Association, the Chattanooga Regional History Museum, and The Bright School; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of the first class of Leadership Chattanooga, Mrs. Garth is a member of the Junior League of Chattanooga and the Chattanooga Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Mrs. Garth received the “Unbought and Unbossed” Award in 2006 from Chattanooga Girls Inc.; and

WHEREAS, a devout Christian, Ardena J. Garth is a member of New United Church, which she has faithfully served in numerous capacities for many years; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Garth is most grateful for the love and companionship she shares with her husband, William Howard Hicks Jr., and their children, Rachel Aurelia and Sarah Elizabeth Hicks; and

WHEREAS, throughout her estimable career, Ardena J. Garth has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of members of the bar and bench and her community alike; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Ardena J. Garth on her honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee as the District Public Defender for the 11th Judicial District of the District Public Defenders Conference and salute her unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.