

SENATE RESOLUTION

8702

By Senator Schoesler

1           WHEREAS, John Spellman, born in Seattle in 1926, left high school  
2 during World War II to enroll in the Merchant Marine Cadet Program,  
3 which led to wartime service in the U.S. Navy, and a ticket to  
4 college through the GI Bill; and

5           WHEREAS, John Spellman graduated from Seattle University as  
6 valedictorian of the class of 1949 and followed his college with  
7 priesthood study in a Jesuit seminary before changing to the study of  
8 the law at Georgetown University; and

9           WHEREAS, In 1954, after returning to Seattle, he married Lois  
10 Murphy, whom he had known since a Spanish class at Seattle University  
11 and who was the only woman in the class of 1949 to major in labor  
12 relations; and

13           WHEREAS, Lois Spellman was described as being both fiercely  
14 protective of her family and one of the most welcoming and kind  
15 persons that one could meet, with a very strong interest in politics  
16 that quickly led her to become her husband's greatest advisor and  
17 debate opponent; and

18           WHEREAS, While practicing maritime and labor law, John Spellman  
19 also became a political reformer, working with other King County  
20 Republicans to promote civil rights, environmental stewardship, and  
21 modern government; and

22           WHEREAS, John Spellman was elected to the King County Commission  
23 in 1966 and played a key role in establishing the county's new

1 government structure under the Home Rule Charter of 1968, then was  
2 elected as the first executive of King County in 1969; and

3 WHEREAS, As executive, John Spellman worked to clean up King  
4 County government through reforms to prevent nepotism, patronage, and  
5 other corruption, and standing for racial and gender equality,  
6 criminal justice reforms, land use planning, environmental  
7 protection, and historic preservation; and

8 WHEREAS, John Spellman led King County through the aerospace  
9 industry crisis and high unemployment of the early 1970s and later  
10 the push to support big-league sports in Seattle through the building  
11 of the Kingdome and pursuit of sports franchises; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1980, John Spellman was elected the eighteenth  
13 governor of Washington, carrying thirty-two of the state's thirty-  
14 nine counties and becoming the only county commissioner to ever  
15 become governor; and

16 WHEREAS, Upon taking office, Governor Spellman immediately  
17 inherited a huge revenue deficit, yet upheld his commitment to  
18 support public schools, with basic education receiving more than half  
19 of the spending in his first biennium budget, setting a standard that  
20 was not reached again until the 2017-2019 operating budget; and

21 WHEREAS, John Spellman's many achievements during his  
22 governorship ranged from his defense of Puget Sound against a  
23 proposed underwater oil pipeline and efforts to promote job creation  
24 in distressed counties, to the creation of the state Housing Finance  
25 Commission and the Office of Minority and Women's Business  
26 Enterprises; and

27 WHEREAS, First Lady Lois Spellman's commitment to her husband and  
28 their six children remained steady and sturdy from their "I Do"  
29 through the governor's mansion and beyond; and

30 WHEREAS, Mrs. Spellman insisted that the Legislature designate  
31 employees of the governor's mansion as state employees with health  
32 care and pension benefits, worked to display art by local Northwest  
33 painters and artists, and hosted receptions honoring such artists as  
34 Kenneth Callahan, Fay Jones, and Elton Bennett; and

35 WHEREAS, The Spellmans' work to protect and better Puget Sound  
36 represented a profile in courage;

37 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate  
38 honor the life and service of Governor John Spellman and First Lady  
39 Lois Spellman and recognize their dedication to civility, community,  
40 and the great state of Washington.

1       BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
2 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the  
3 Spellmans' children Margo, Bart, David, Jeffrey, Teresa, and Kat.

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