

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  
2 was 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,  
5 patronage, and other corruption, and standing for racial and  
6 gender equality, criminal justice reforms, land use planning,  
7 environmental 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  
10 later the push to support big-league sports in Seattle through  
11 the building of the Kingdome and pursuit of sports franchises;  
12 and

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

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

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

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

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

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

3           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State  
4 Senate honor the life and service of Governor John Spellman and  
5 First Lady Lois Spellman and recognize their dedication to  
6 civility, community, and the great state of Washington.

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

11 I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,  
12 do hereby certify that this is a true and  
13 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8702,  
14 adopted by the Senate  
15 March 5, 2018

16 BRAD HENDRICKSON  
17 Secretary of the Senate