SENATE RESOLUTION

8705

By Senators Frockt and Wagoner

WHEREAS, Justice Rosselle Pekelis, a champion for equality and civil rights, who dedicated her professional life to serving with impartiality and care as a judge on multiple courts of our state's judicial branch, passed away on December 9, 2019, surrounded by family; and

WHEREAS, Her childhood spent in hiding from Nazis taught her the dangers of prejudice and discrimination, lessons that informed her adult life after she and her family escaped Europe and arrived safely in New York; and

WHEREAS, She decided to pursue law school at the University of Missouri after devoting a decade to raising her three children, overcoming societal resistance to the idea of a mother practicing law at the highest level; and

WHEREAS, She moved her family to Seattle to follow her dreams and began working for the law firm MacDonald Hoague & Bayless, and later Helsell, Fetterman, Martin, Todd & Hokanson; and

WHEREAS, She was appointed to the King County Superior Court by Governor Dixy Lee Ray in 1981, and was appointed to the Court of Appeals by Governor Booth Gardner in 1986, where she issued an opinion that women could not be excused from juries solely based on their gender, cementing her status as a trailblazer for women in law; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, she became just the fourth woman justice and the second Jewish member to serve on the state Supreme Court, where she was regarded with wide respect throughout the legal community for her intelligence and even application of the law in a wide variety of cases; and

WHEREAS, She pushed boundaries for the benefit of all women, showing that regardless of gender, age, or background, what matters is the competence you bring to the bench; and

WHEREAS, In her retirement from the Court, she and other former Washington state Superior Court Judges founded Judicial Dispute Resolution so they could continue to provide highly qualified mediation and arbitration services to Washington citizens; and

WHEREAS, Judicial Dispute Resolution is to this day a successful business, and has donated generously to charity since its inception, demonstrating the values of its founders; and

WHEREAS, She is survived by her husband, Frank Retman, six children, Melissa Standish, Alex Higgins, Jenny Zavatsky, Zach Pekelis Jones, Sonnet Retman, Mischa Retman, and ten grandchildren;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize and honor the distinguished life and public service of Justice Rosselle Pekelis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to members of Justice Pekelis' immediate family.

I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,

do hereby certify that this is a true and

correct copy of Senate Resolution 8705,

adopted by the Senate

March 4, 2020

BRAD HENDRICKSON

Secretary of the Senate