

SENATE RESOLUTION

8708

By Senators Pedersen, Das, Braun, Wagoner, Kuderer, Fortunato, Nguyen, Hunt, Takko, Salomon, Sheldon, Hasegawa, Conway, Randall, Carlyle, Wilson, C., Short, McCoy, Rolfes, Becker, Frockt, Darneille, Stanford, Keiser, Lovelett, Van De Wege, Honeyford, King, O'Ban, Padden, Schoesler, Hawkins, Rivers, Cleveland, Hobbs, Dhingra, Saldaña, Mullet, Liias, Walsh, Warnick, Wilson, L., Holy, Ericksen, Zeiger, Muzzall, Billig, Wellman, and Brown

1 WHEREAS, James R. Ellis, distinguished attorney, committed civic
2 activist, and beloved family man, passed away following a lifetime of
3 dedicated public service; and

4 WHEREAS, Historylink.org reports that "James R. Ellis never held
5 public office . . . yet, as a citizen activist for more than half a
6 century, he left a bigger footprint on Seattle and King County than
7 perhaps any other single individual"; and

8 WHEREAS, Before embarking on a career as a community leader and
9 lawyer, Mr. Ellis graduated from Franklin High School in Seattle and
10 Yale University, served in the Army Air Corps during World War II,
11 and resolved to honor the life of his brother Bob, who was killed in
12 the war, by improving the lives of others; and

13 WHEREAS, Following graduation from the University of Washington
14 School of Law, Mr. Ellis joined the Seattle law firm of Preston,
15 Thorgrimson & Horowitz and developed his specialty and expertise in
16 municipal bonds; and

17 WHEREAS, Mr. Ellis married the love of his life, Mary Lou, and
18 together raised four children at their home on the shores of Lake
19 Washington, enjoying the magnificent outdoors of the Pacific
20 Northwest; and

21 WHEREAS, Mr. Ellis, thanks to his tireless advocacy for a new
22 form of regional government to address local problems, became
23 instrumental in the formation of the Municipality of Metropolitan

1 Seattle, responsible for the cleanup of Lake Washington and creation
2 of an innovative countywide transit system; and

3 WHEREAS, In recognition of his involvement in cleaning up Lake
4 Washington, Mr. Ellis was appointed to the National Water Commission
5 and was offered the position of the first director of the
6 Environmental Protection Agency, eventually declining in the belief
7 he could do more good staying in Washington; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Ellis's unwavering efforts led to the establishment
9 of The Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, responsible for creating
10 the permanent greenway, stretching from the Puget Sound to the
11 Kittitas foothills along the I-90 corridor; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Ellis shaped the lives of the people of Washington
13 by improving public infrastructure, parks, trails, and the
14 accessibility of resources to the public and underserved through his
15 roles as leader of Forward Thrust, trustee of the Ford Foundation,
16 regent for the University of Washington, and first chairman of the
17 Washington State Convention Center;

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate
19 express its deepest condolences to the family, friends, colleagues,
20 and others whose lives were improved by the public service of James
21 Reed Ellis, and acknowledge his invaluable contributions to the state
22 of Washington; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
24 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the family
25 of James R. Ellis.

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