

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
2 creation of an innovative countywide transit system; and

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

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

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

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

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

27 I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate,
28 do hereby certify that this is a true and
29 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8708,
30 adopted by the Senate
31 March 7, 2020

32 BRAD HENDRICKSON
33 Secretary of the Senate