

Enrolled

Senate Concurrent Resolution 209

Sponsored by Senator WAGNER, Representative BOICE; Senators JAMA, KNOPP, PATTERSON, SMITH DB, Representatives EVANS, GOMBERG, HOLVEY (Presession filed.)

Whereas Joanne Russell Verger was born in Amite, Louisiana, on July 19, 1930, to Robert Weldon Russell and Nannie Claire Russell (Lingo); and

Whereas as the last of four children, Joanne Verger's upbringing in the throes of the Great Depression left an indelible mark on her life; and

Whereas growing up in the Deep South contributed to a rich and full childhood that Joanne Verger would recall fondly later in life; and

Whereas Joanne Verger's grandfather was a Methodist minister, and he imprinted on her a devout sense of faith, modesty and incredible spiritual and personal discipline; and

Whereas Joanne Verger was an excellent student in high school and graduated at the age of 16; and

Whereas after high school, Joanne Verger enrolled at Northwestern State College in Louisiana, where she excelled as a thespian and Shakespearean actress, starring as Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and

Whereas while in college, Joanna Verger reconnected with her childhood friend Lawton, whom she first met when she was in third grade; and

Whereas Joanne and Lawton Verger were married on November 19, 1950; and

Whereas Joanne and Lawton Verger later moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where Lawton took a job as a Pontiac salesman; and

Whereas Joanne and Lawton Verger welcomed their first child, Kathy, in 1952, followed by their sons Jim and John in 1955 and 1957 and their daughter Anne Adair in 1960; and

Whereas in 1969, Joanne and Lawton Verger moved to Coos Bay, Oregon, where they took ownership of an automobile dealership; and

Whereas Joanne Verger became the tourism director for the City of Coos Bay and later helped create the Bay Area Fun Festival and the Blackberry Arts Festival; and

Whereas Joanne Verger won a seat on the Coos Bay City Council in 1990; and

Whereas Joanne Verger was elected the City of Coos Bay's first female mayor in 1992; and

Whereas Joanne Verger was elected to the Oregon Legislative Assembly in 2000, where she served as a member of the House of Representatives from 2001 to 2005 and as a member of the Senate from 2005 to 2013; and

Whereas Joanne Verger was a tireless advocate for her community and a champion for rural Oregonians everywhere; and

Whereas Joanne Verger represented the true spirit of bipartisanship, working across party lines to create a better Oregon; and

Whereas Joanne Verger served the State of Oregon with dignity, honesty, kindness and resolve; and

Whereas Joanne Verger wrote two books, *Dancing with the Daffodils* and *Moonlight on the Pond*, reflecting on her childhood memories in the Deep South; and

Whereas Joanne Verger passed away at the age of 93 on September 22, 2023; and

Whereas Joanne Verger is survived by her four children and their spouses, Jim and Diane Verger, Kathy and Jerry Muscus, Anne Johnson, and John and Yvette Verger; her four grandchildren, Aaron Johnson, Logan Reeder, James Verger and Nissa Thompson; and her great-grandchild, Alexandra Verger; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Eighty-second Legislative Assembly, celebrate the life and accomplishments of Joanne Russell Verger, and we recognize and honor her contributions to the people of this state; and be it further

Resolved, That we share a deep sense of loss with the entire Capitol community in the absence of this remarkable public servant; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution shall be presented to the family of Joanne Russell Verger as an expression of our sympathy and condolences.

Adopted by Senate March 5, 2024

Obadiah Rutledge, Secretary of Senate

Rob Wagner, President of Senate

Adopted by House March 7, 2024

Dan Rayfield, Speaker of House