

By Representatives Jennings and McGriff

House Resolution

A resolution honoring the memory of Steven C.
O'Connell.

WHEREAS, born January 22, 1916, in West Palm Beach, the
Honorable Steven C. O'Connell led a life of adventure and
achievement, remembered as a man exceeded in integrity by no
one and matched by very few, quick with a quip and blunt with
his opinion, yet renowned for his politeness and good manners,
and

WHEREAS, Stephen C. O'Connell attended the University
of Florida, where he was president of the student body and
captain of the boxing team and where he became a lifelong,
fiercely loyal Gator, who, according to former Florida State
University president Stanley Marshall, took great delight in
beating the Seminoles and "rubbing it in" when he did, and

WHEREAS, Stephen C. O'Connell rose to the rank of major
during World War II and returned home to run a successful law
practice in Fort Lauderdale until he was finally persuaded by
Governor LeRoy Collins to accept a Supreme Court appointment
in 1955, where he won a reputation for legal fairness and
scholarship, and

WHEREAS, the only person to lead both the state's
highest court and its largest university, Stephen C. O'Connell
remained on the Supreme Court until 1967, serving as chief
justice his final year, when he resigned to accept the
presidency of the University of Florida, a position he held
until 1973, the first alumnus of the school to become its
president, and

WHEREAS, Stephen C. O'Connell was the recipient of
innumerable awards and honors, among his favorites, doctorates

1 from Florida State University and the University of Notre Dame
2 and his election to the Florida Sports Hall of Fame in Lake
3 City, but the most notable of his honors are those in the
4 memories of those whose lives he touched, as exemplified by
5 the remark of his long-time friend, former Lieutenant Governor
6 Wayne Mixson, "He was the kindest, most gentle man I ever
7 met," NOW, THEREFORE,

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9 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
10 Florida:

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12 That the House of Representatives pauses in its
13 deliberations to honor the memory of a great man and
14 superlative statesman who served his state and nation with
15 distinction, the Honorable Stephen C. O'Connell.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution
17 be presented to Mrs. Cindy Bowling O'Connell as a tangible
18 token of the sentiments expressed herein.

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