

HR 9117

2004

House Resolution

A resolution honoring Chesterfield Smith.

WHEREAS, rising from humble beginnings, Chesterfield Smith, whether serving his country during World War II, pursuing a public cause, or raising the standards of the legal profession, left a moral footprint that gained him the highest regard of his fellow citizens and blazed a trail for many to follow, and

WHEREAS, past president of both the American Bar Association and The Florida Bar, and a founder of one of the state's largest law firms, few have done more to enhance the legal profession than has Chesterfield Smith, whose dedication to improving the organized bar earned him the title "America's Lawyer," and

WHEREAS, Chesterfield Smith was a resolute, tough-minded individual who, never backing down from conflict, took on the highest when as president of the American Bar Association he denounced President Nixon for firing special prosecutor Archibald Cox, his simple, direct "No man is above the law" becoming a defining moment in the American legal system, and

WHEREAS, Chesterfield Smith was one of the first to actively recruit minorities to his firm, which under his leadership became a model of diversity, focusing on opening a door that had been historically closed to minorities and women; and he never lost interest in guiding young lawyers, constantly prodding and encouraging them to "be somebody," a legacy reflected in the lives of thousands who follow his simple mantra to "do good," and

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29 WHEREAS, Chesterfield Smith's voice was that of the legally
 30 disenfranchised and, constantly reminding lawyers that the
 31 privilege to practice law carries with it the responsibility to
 32 represent the powerless, the poor, the underrepresented, and the
 33 victims of discrimination, he was instrumental in creating the
 34 national Legal Services Corporation, whose building in Miami
 35 bears his name, and

36 WHEREAS, United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader
 37 Ginsburg once described this extraordinary man as being "among
 38 the brightest, boldest, bravest, all-around most effective
 39 lawyers ever bred in Florida and the U.S.A.," and, although the
 40 state and nation deeply mourned his death, his legacy is that
 41 not of loss, but of one whose deeds place him in a pantheon of
 42 greatness and are those to which all may aspire, NOW, THEREFORE,

43
 44 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
 45 Florida:

46
 47 That the House of Representatives takes great pride in
 48 recognizing the outstanding contributions made by Chesterfield
 49 Smith to this chamber, this state, and this nation.

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be
 51 presented to Jacqueline Allee Smith, Chesterfield Smith, Jr.,
 52 and Rhoda Smith Kibler, wife, son, and daughter of "America's
 53 Lawyer," as a tangible token of the sentiments expressed herein.