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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE
JOHN F. MCBURNEY

Introduced By: Senators Nesselbush, Paiva Weed, Ruggerio, Goodwin, and Lombardi

Date Introduced: June 11, 2015

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, It is with profound sadness and regret that this Senate has learned of the
2 passing of the Honorable John F. McBurney, a well-respected former member of the Rhode
3 Island Senate, a successful attorney, and a longtime resident of the City of Pawtucket; and

4 WHEREAS, John McBurney was the loving husband of Ann McBurney. Together they
5 raised five children, the Honorable Magistrate John McBurney, III, and his wife, Cheryl, Michael
6 McBurney and his wife, Kathleen, the Honorable Cristine McBurney, Dr. Cathleen McBurney-
7 Saros and her husband, Nicholas, Mark McBurney, Esq., and the late Kevin McBurney. He was
8 also blessed with 20 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews; and

9 WHEREAS, Born in Hebbroville, Massachusetts, Mr. McBurney was the son of the late
10 John F. McBurney and Mary McBurney, and the brother of Alice Smith, and the late Mary
11 McBurney and Ann Burns. He was a graduate of Attleboro High School, Providence College,
12 where he was voted first team AAU All-American center fielder, and Boston College Law
13 School. In addition, he had played AA baseball for the Pittsburgh Pirates and New York Giants
14 and had set an Interstate League record for hitting three home runs in one game; and

15 WHEREAS, With honor and courage, John McBurney served our nation as an infantry
16 scout with the 103rd Infantry Division during WWII, and saw combat in France and Bavaria.
17 Prior to shipping overseas, he had been the 411th Battalion's Welterweight boxing champion.
18 During his time in the Army, he helped liberate the Landsberg Nazi concentration camp and was
19 briefly captured before escaping from German forces. He finished his service as the military

1 governor of Fulpmes, Austria, and was awarded the Legion of Honor (France's highest award)
2 and the Bronze Star for his valor; and

3 WHEREAS, In November of 1957, Mr. McBurney was elected to serve in the Rhode
4 Island Senate, where he represented the people of District 38 in Pawtucket for the next 16 years.
5 During his tenure with the Senate, he chaired the Judiciary and the Health, Education and Welfare
6 Committees, and in 1964, introduced Rhode Island's Fair Housing Act over entrenched business
7 interests; and

8 WHEREAS, To say that John McBurney was a larger than life character would be an
9 understatement. His zest, influence and talents were immeasurable. He loved the law and believed
10 strongly in the value of public life and the noble calling of politics. He served as a delegate to the
11 1960 and 1964 Democratic National Conventions, was a practicing trial attorney and founded
12 McBurney Law Services in Pawtucket, and as a sole practitioner in the 1970s, he reportedly had
13 more cases on the civil jury docket than any other attorney or firm in the state. In addition, he
14 taught school in Pawtucket, served as Pawtucket Assistant City Solicitor, was a Commissioner
15 with the Rhode Island Board of Elections for fourteen years, and proudly maintained his electrical
16 contractor's license; and

17 WHEREAS, The measure of a life well-lived is not in how much money one has or what
18 possessions one has accumulated. The Honorable John McBurney instilled his family with a
19 desire to likewise serve the community and to his great and enduring credit, his children,
20 grandchildren and great-grandchildren are the most memorable and meaningful tribute to the man
21 they loved so much; now, therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
23 hereby offers its deepest sympathy to the entire McBurney Family on the passing of the
24 Honorable John F. McBurney; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
26 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mrs. Ann McBurney and Family.

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