

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1836

A RESOLUTION memorializing Dr. Robert C. "Bob" Harder and recognizing his longstanding and dedicated service to the people of Kansas, especially to those in need.

WHEREAS, Robert C. "Bob" Harder, Th.D. died April 12, 2014, at age 84, after a lifetime of steadfast service to his family, state, community and church. He was born on June 4, 1929, in Horton, Kansas, to the Reverend and Mrs. Clarence Pop Harder; and

WHEREAS, Growing up as the son of a United Methodist minister, Dr. Harder called several northeast Kansas communities home. He graduated from Troy High School in 1947; he earned an undergraduate degree in 1951 from Baker University and maintained close ties to the school throughout his life. In 1954, he earned a Master of Theology degree from Southern Methodist University, which also later recognized him as alumnus of the year. In 1958, he achieved a doctorate of theology from Boston University; and

WHEREAS, Bob married Dorothy Lou Welty on July 31, 1953, and Dottie, as she is known to family and friends, survives at their Topeka home. After spending several months traveling in Europe, the Harders returned to Kansas in 1958 when Bob accepted an appointment as pastor of the East Topeka United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, In 1960, Dr. Harder was elected to the Kansas House of Representatives, 33rd District in Topeka, beginning what would become an historic career in state government. He left elective office in 1967 to work for Governor Robert Docking, the first of five Kansas governors he served; and

WHEREAS, After helping to create the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Dr. Harder headed the agency as Secretary until 1987, earning him the distinction of being the longest-serving cabinet secretary in state history. He later served as Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment; and

WHEREAS, As Secretary of SRS, Dr. Harder earned the well-deserved reputation of being a tireless advocate for Kansans in need of community-based services due to their developmental disabilities, mental illnesses or other health-related issues; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harder left state government in the early 1990s, but never really retired. He taught at Washburn University and the University of Kansas and served as a consultant to the Menninger Foundation and as the legislative liaison for the United Methodist Church. He also served as president of the Topeka League of Women Voters and worked as a volunteer lobbyist for the Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas; and

WHEREAS, For many years, he delighted in working with and reading to students at two Topeka elementary schools. He also served on the Board of Trustees for the Topeka Shawnee County Public Library and he was a constant presence in the Topeka community; and

WHEREAS, Bob and Dottie were blessed with two children, Anne Harder Marley, Shawnee, married to Dennis G. Marley and James David Harder, Boston, and two grandchildren, Eric Harder Marley, Olathe, who, like Bob, was a Baker graduate, and Claire Marley, a student at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we remember Dr. Robert C. "Bob" Harder and recognize his longstanding and dedicated service to the people of Kansas, especially to those in need; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate shall provide five enrolled copies of this resolution to Senator Hensley.

Senate Resolution No. 1836 was sponsored by Senators Hensley, Kelly and V. Schmidt.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.