

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2013**  
**RATIFIED BILL**

**RESOLUTION 2014-5**  
**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 882**

A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF MARTIN LUTHER NESBITT, JR., FORMER MEMBER OF THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Whereas, Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., was born in Asheville, North Carolina, on September 25, 1946, to Martin Luther Nesbitt, Sr., and Mary Cordell Nesbitt; and

Whereas, Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., graduated from Reynolds High School in 1964 and attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, earning a B.A. in 1970 and a law degree in 1973; and

Whereas, Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., practiced law in Asheville and served his profession as a member of the Buncombe County Bar Association, the North Carolina Bar Association, and the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers; and

Whereas, Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., served with honor and distinction as a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, where he represented the citizens of Buncombe County for 31 years; and

Whereas, Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., was appointed to fill the unexpired term of his mother, Representative Mary C. Nesbitt, in 1979, then went on to serve 11 terms in the House of Representatives between 1981 to 1994 and 1997 to 2004 and five terms in the Senate from 2004 to 2014; and

Whereas, as a State representative, Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., served as cochair of the Appropriations Committee, under House Speaker Dan Blue, and the Joint Select State Health Insurance Committee and was a member of several other committees, including Courts, Justice, Constitutional Amendments & Referenda; Finance; Judiciary II; Science and Technology; and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations; and

Whereas, as a State senator, Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., served as both Senate Majority and Minority Leader; was chair of the Judiciary I Committee and the Select Committee on Economic Recovery and vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services and Mental Health and Youth Services; and was a member of several other Senate committees, including Appropriations/Base Budget; Commerce, Education/Higher Education, Finance, Health Care, and Rules and Operations of the Senate; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt was described by Senator Dan Blue as "a Giant figure, having a sense of Mountain populism that ran through him and he sensed that his major charge was to look out for the average everyday person"; and as a leader he "came to work every day with the same values: stick up for the little guy; fight to give every North Carolinian a meaningful education, quality healthcare, and a chance for a good job; and never back down from a fight"; and

Whereas, Representative Susan Fisher remembers speaking with Senator Nesbitt: "he and I both spoke of the honor of holding the seat once held by the first woman elected to the North Carolina Legislature; Lillian Exum Clement, but for me it is also an honor to have been appointed to the seat held by Martin Nesbitt, a man from the mountains who worked every day to improve the lives of his people"; and

Whereas, during his tenure in the General Assembly, Senator Nesbitt became the body's expert in the area of health and human services, especially Medicaid; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt was instrumental in reforming the State's mental health care system and in providing health care for those in need and children through programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP); and



Whereas, concerned for his beloved Western North Carolina, Senator Nesbitt sponsored the Clean Smokestacks Act, promoted ridge law legislation, worked to secure funding for the North Carolina Arboretum, and helped to start AdvantageWest, which has promoted economic development in Western North Carolina for over 20 years; and

Whereas, some of Senator Nesbitt's other accomplishments include helping to create the Western North Carolina Agricultural Center, upgrading facilities at public schools, and providing access to quality universities and community colleges; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt was an advocate for the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) and a leader on health issues across the State as demonstrated by his work with the MAHEC nurse practitioner certificate program and through his support of the creation of the Center for Healthy Aging; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt was a supporter of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, who deemed him a friend and an ally to their Tribe and a dedicated servant of North Carolina; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt also served in many capacities on a number of boards and commissions, including as a member of the North Carolina Child Health Task Force and North Carolina Center for Nursing Advisory Council; as chair of the Holocaust Education Program; and as director of the Buncombe County Unit of the American Cancer Society, the Mediation Center, and the Western North Carolina Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt enjoyed his work at the North Carolina General Assembly, but he also enjoyed what North Carolina gave to him: NASCAR. He was an avid race fan. He saw an opportunity to bridge his love for NASCAR with his senatorial work by organizing the General Assembly's Pit Crew Challenge. It's only fitting that he will have a race in his honor, "The Sen. Martin Nesbitt Memorial Race," at Newport Motor Speedway on June 21, 2014. Senator Nesbitt has been a supporter of the Speedway and a part of the Southeast Super Truck Series where he supported his son Mart's racing efforts and then his granddaughter Taylor's racing career. Newport Motor Speedway has dubbed him "Our Racing Representative"; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt was a member of the St. Luke's Episcopal Church; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt was a devout family man and a fair but tough statesman, who served the State of North Carolina with extraordinary dedication and tenacity; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt died on March 6, 2014, at the age of 67, but the day before he died, returned to Asheville to a hero's welcome, riding in an ambulance escorted by sheriff's deputies as well-wishers lined the road waving "Get Well Soon" signs and American flags; and

Whereas, Senator Nesbitt leaves to cherish his memory his wife of 35 years, Deane S. Nesbitt; a son, Martin Nesbitt; a stepson, Chad Nesbitt; a sister, Mary Ann Dotson-Silvey; and two grandchildren; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

**SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., and expresses the appreciation of this State and its citizens for the service he rendered.

**SECTION 2.** The General Assembly extends its deepest sympathy to the family of Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr., for the loss of a beloved family member.

**SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the family of Martin Luther Nesbitt, Jr.

**SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 25<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2014.

s/ Daniel J. Forest  
President of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore  
Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives