

By: Hefner

H.R. No. 616

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Donald K. Stephens has had a transformative impact  
2 in the lives of countless people through his efforts as the founder  
3 of Mercy Ships, an international faith-based charity that uses  
4 hospital ships and volunteer professionals to provide free medical  
5 care to men, women, and children across the globe; and

6           WHEREAS, In 1978, Don Stephens founded Mercy Ships along with  
7 his wife, Deyon; its vision was inspired by the work of the  
8 international hospital ship S.S. *Hope*, as well as by their  
9 experience as the parents of a child with disabilities; he oversaw  
10 the growth and development of the organization until his retirement  
11 from operational duties, and he also hosted a daily radio broadcast  
12 called "The Mercy Minute," which aired on some 840 stations for over  
13 two decades; today, he continues to promote the Mercy Ships mission  
14 internationally in his role as president emeritus; and

15           WHEREAS, A global Christian missionary organization, Mercy  
16 Ships operates two vessels, the *Africa Mercy* and the *Global Mercy*,  
17 the latter of which was funded by a capital campaign managed by  
18 Mr. Stephens and commissioned into service in 2022; each ship is  
19 deployed to field missions in low- and middle-income nations, where  
20 thousands of volunteers perform such surgical procedures as cleft  
21 lip and palate surgery, cataract removal, and orthopedic and facial  
22 reconstruction; all patients are treated free of charge, regardless  
23 of their religion, race, or gender, and since its inception, close  
24 to three million people have directly benefited from the services

1 the charity has provided; and

2 WHEREAS, In addition to overseeing the operations of the  
3 organization, Mr. Stephens has authored three books, *Trial by*  
4 *Trial*, *Mandate for Mercy*, and *Ships of Mercy*; in 2009, he was  
5 presented with the International Humanitarian of the Year award  
6 from Variety International; and

7 WHEREAS, Under the compassionate leadership of Don Stephens,  
8 Mercy Ships has been a beacon of hope to the world's most  
9 vulnerable, and his lifelong service in behalf of the  
10 organization's mission and his steadfast dedication to the greater  
11 good are indeed worthy of special recognition; now, therefore, be  
12 it

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 89th Texas  
14 Legislature hereby honor Donald K. Stephens for his work as the  
15 founder and president emeritus of Mercy Ships and extend to him  
16 sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

17 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
18 prepared for Mr. Stephens as an expression of high regard by the  
19 Texas House of Representatives.