

Senators Proos and Hildenbrand offered the following concurrent resolution:

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 16.

A concurrent resolution of tribute offered as a memorial for Harry T. Gast, former member of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Whereas, It is with great sadness that the members of this legislature learned of the passing of Harry Gast. Devoted to his family, dedicated to farming, and a true leader for his constituents in Southwest Michigan, Harry Gast was a mentor, colleague, and highly devoted public servant. Our prayers go out to his family; and

Whereas, A lifelong resident of Southwest Michigan, Harry Gast grew up on his family farm where he spent a lifetime farming, fishing, hunting, and trapping. Honest, proud, and direct, he began his public service in his home of Lincoln Township, serving over the years as township supervisor, treasurer, and an elected member of the school board. In 1970, he was elected to the House of Representatives bringing his farmer's common sense and spirit to Lansing, where he had a profound and lasting impact on many Michigan lives. In 1978, Mr. Gast was elected to the Michigan Senate where he served until 2002; and

Whereas, During both his House and Senate tenures, Harry Gast focused on issues that were important to him and his constituents. He supported natural resources and agriculture, and took a great interest in education, especially at the community college level. He earned numerous awards and honors of distinction for his work as a legislator throughout his 32-year career in Lansing, including three honorary degrees. He was honored by organizations as varied as the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, the Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, and Southwest Michigan College; and

Whereas, Harry Gast will be most remembered for his work as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, on which he served throughout his entire Senate tenure and as committee chair for 18 years. A true problem solver, Senator Gast understood the details and nuances of the budget process, focusing on the welfare of Michigan residents rather than politics. He provided a steadying influence on the appropriations process during periods of serious economic challenge and was respected for conveying budget news honestly to legislators; and

Whereas, Beginning in 1992, Senator Gast presided over the Appropriations Committee in the room originally designed for the Michigan Supreme Court. Dedicated in 1879, the Supreme Court used the chamber for almost 100 years, longer than any other location in the state. The chamber escaped pressure through the years to be subdivided and reallocated as office space, and was used as a Senate hearing room after 1970. The Senate Appropriations Committee moved into the newly restored chambers in 1992 with Senator Gast as the committee chair; and

Whereas, The chamber appropriately reflects the important and serious work carried out within its walls and the values of our state, in which Harry Gast believed and worked every day as a Senator to uphold. Using humble materials applied to appear as expensive stone and wood and hand-painted walls rather than expensive wall coverings, the chamber still exudes a sense of opulence and formality. It represents the traditions, first of the Supreme Court, and now of the Legislature and Appropriations Committee, that are so important to the people of Michigan. Yet, it belies the very basic nature of the work and effort that takes place here every day by committed, concerned men and women such as Harry Gast. To this day, the chamber continues to impress and serve as one of the busiest public meeting and hearing rooms; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That we offer this expression of our highest tribute to honor the memory of Harry T. Gast, a member of the House of Representatives from 1971 to 1978 and the Senate from 1979 to 2002; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate Appropriations room, located on the third floor of the Michigan Capitol Building, be named the Harry T. Gast Appropriations Room and that markers designating this memorial be placed at the room; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Gast family as evidence of our lasting esteem for his memory, and to the members of the Michigan State Capitol Commission.