

No. R-53. House concurrent resolution honoring Bonnie and Timothy Burke for their outstanding work at Wilson House in East Dorset.

(H.C.R.33)

Offered by: Representative Sullivan of Dorset

Offered by: Senators Campion and Sears

Whereas, in 1852, the local entrepreneur Ira Cochran opened a new hotel in the village of East Dorset, and

Whereas, by the late 19th century, the Wilson family owned an interest in the hotel that in 1895 was named the Wilson House, and which, on November 26 of that year, was the birthplace of William G. Wilson, and

Whereas, William Wilson was the unidentified Bill W. who cofounded Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in 1935, and

Whereas, in 1987, Ozzie Lepper purchased the then-deteriorating Wilson House, restoring it as a hotel, a respite site for AA participants, and as a memorial to William Wilson, and

Whereas, the mission of the now nonprofit Wilson House is “to responsibly maintain the historic birthplace, memory, spirit, and purpose of Bill Wilson,” and

Whereas, since its reopening in the late 1980s, Wilson House has been a spiritually-based organization that “fosters community relations and avoids commercialism,” and

Whereas, Bonnie Burke is devoted to her Christian faith and had spent much of her time helping the disabled as her late first husband had been disabled for many years, and

Whereas, after her husband’s death, she was invited on a blind date with Ozzie Lepper who explained the role of Wilson House and discussed the importance of AA participants thanking God for the sobriety they have achieved, and

Whereas, Bonnie and Ozzie married, and she became a critical player in the restoration of Wilson House, its programming, and the development of the adjacent Griffith Library that houses memorabilia of William Wilson, and

Whereas, in 2011, after Ozzie Lepper had died, Bonnie married Tim Burke who has been a loyal supporter of and participant in his wife’s involvement with Wilson House, and

Whereas, Bonnie Burke is now writing a book about Wilson House, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly honors Bonnie and Timothy Burke for their outstanding work at Wilson House in East Dorset, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Bonnie and Timothy Burke.