



# State of Tennessee

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 444

By Massey, Briggs

A RESOLUTION to recognize and congratulate Dr. Karen M. Sowers on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of service; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Karen M. Sowers is one such estimable individual, who has served with distinction as dean of the University of Tennessee (UT) College of Social Work and as the Alvin and Sally Beaman Endowed Professor in the college, from which she will be taking a much-deserved retirement on August 15, 2017; and

WHEREAS, as dean of UT's College of Social Work, Dr. Sowers oversees four academic programs, both the Knoxville and Nashville campuses, the online programs, the Center for Behavioral Health Research, and the Social Work Office for Research and Public Service; and

WHEREAS, with twenty years at the helm of the UT College of Social Work, Dr. Karen Sowers is currently the longest-serving dean at UT; under her leadership, the college developed an award-winning online master's degree program and a nationally renowned veterinary social work program, in addition to creating five endowed professorships, which enable the college to attract top research scholars to the faculty; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Dr. Sowers established the first Board of Visitors for the college, providing enhanced visibility within the community and drawing advice and support to the college for its programs and growth; and

WHEREAS, a visionary who has encouraged digital communication via online technologies and web-based social media applications, Dr. Karen Sowers helped guide the college in acclimating to the digital age; during her tenure, the college hired its first computer and information technology experts, established ventures into online continuing education, and developed online Master of Science in Social Work and Doctor of Social Work programs; and

WHEREAS, in honor of her decades of devoted service to UT, Dr. Sowers will, upon retirement, be named dean emerita and professor emerita; and

WHEREAS, immediately prior to joining the faculty at UT, Dr. Karen Sowers served as director of the School of Social Work at Florida International University (FIU) from 1994-1997; before assuming the role of director at FIU, she had served as an associate professor at the university. Her early career also included clinical social work and a stint as an assistant professor in Social Work at Winthrop College in South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Karen Sowers received her bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Central Florida and her master's and doctoral degrees in social work from Florida State University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sowers is nationally recognized for her research and scholarship in the areas of international practice, juvenile justice, child welfare, cultural diversity and culturally effective intervention strategies for social work practice, evidence-based social work practice, and social work education; she was the founding co-editor of the journal *Best Practices in Mental Health*, is widely published in the field of social work, and has co-authored or contributed to more than sixty books and numerous journal articles; and

WHEREAS, often duly honored for her commitment to excellence, Dr. Sowers was named a Distinguished Scholar Fellow in the National Academies of Practice in 2013, and she received Mental Health America's 2016 George Goodman and Ruth P. Brudney Social Work Award which recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to the care and treatment of people with mental illness; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Karen Sowers has served on the boards of many professional organizations, including the National Network for Social Work Managers, the American Board of Mental Health Specialists, the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare Advisory Council, the Council on Social Work Education, and the Council on Social Work Education Commission on Research; and

WHEREAS, additionally, she has served on the board of various organizations in Knoxville, including Sertoma, The Next Door, the Knoxville Police Department Community Advisory Committee, and the Knoxville Safe Policy Committee; she is currently on the board of the Helen Ross McNabb Center and the Harmony Family Center; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sowers is a dedicated fan of the Tennessee Volunteers, and her devotion to the team led to her selection as the honorary Vol football coach for last season's victory over the University of Florida; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sowers's distinguished career as educator, clinician, leader, and author spans more than forty years, and her leadership has moved the UT College of Social Work into the top tier of schools in the country; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Dr. Karen M. Sowers our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

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ADOPTED: May 9, 2017



RANDY McNALLY  
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE



BETH HARWELL, SPEAKER  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 17<sup>th</sup> day of May 2017



BILL HASLAM, GOVERNOR