



State of Tennessee

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 25

By Massey, Briggs, Gardenhire, Ketron, Niceley, Overbey, Watson, Mr. Speaker McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Connor Concepts of Knoxville on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this legislative body should recognize those exemplary businesses that, through their unwavering commitment to excellence, are a credit to this State; and

WHEREAS, one such remarkable commercial endeavor is Connor Concepts in Knoxville, which is celebrating its twenty-fifth year of operation in the restaurant business; and

WHEREAS, founded by Mike Connor in 1992, Connor Concepts is an organization dedicated to creating a regional system of restaurants featuring a unique dining experience, including The Chop House and Connors Steak and Seafood brands; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of the University of Tennessee, Mr. Connor started his college career pursuing a degree in business before switching to psychology, because he found studying business boring; and

WHEREAS, while enrolled at the University of Tennessee, Mike Connor worked at the Steak and Ale restaurant; he found that he enjoyed the work, the tips, camaraderie, and seeing customers walking out the door with smiles on their faces; and

WHEREAS, when faced with a future in psychology or the restaurant industry, Mr. Connor soon realized the career path he truly wanted to take; and

WHEREAS, having been promoted to a management position at Steak and Ale, Mike Connor found himself being mentored by Norman Brinker, the founder of Steak and Ale, Chili's, and Bennigan's, and whom many credit for helping create the casual dining experience. After managing Steak and Ale restaurants in Nashville, Birmingham, and Chattanooga, Mr. Connor was soon asked to join Brinker International's corporate offices in Dallas, Texas; and

WHEREAS, after ten years with Brinker International, Mike Connor was approached by Knoxville's Regas family about developing a new restaurant for Grady Regas; he joined Grady's in 1982 and helped the company develop a total of eight restaurants; and

WHEREAS, during his time at Grady's, Mr. Connor learned of the business side of the restaurant industry, which included working with attorneys and accountants and dealing with sales taxes, liquor taxes, and licensing; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, Brinker International bought the Grady's chain; Mr. Connor stayed with the Brinker company for a time, but parted ways when faced with the choice of moving back to Texas or staying in Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, after signing a non-compete clause, Mike Connor set out to create a new type of dining experience of his own, and in 1992, he founded Connor Concepts along with a loyal team that included Tony Watson, Kevin Thompson, Bo Connor, and Brian Keyes; and

WHEREAS, the company opened its first restaurant, The Chop House, in 1992; there are now twelve Chop House locations in Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, and Ohio; and

WHEREAS, always intent on creating new and exciting dining experiences, Mike Connor and Connor Concepts opened Connors Steak and Seafood in 2004, and there are now five locations across Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida; and

WHEREAS, with Connor Concepts celebrating its twenty-fifth year in the restaurant business on March 9, the company is also celebrating its expansion across six states with 1,200 employees, 520 of whom work in Knoxville; and

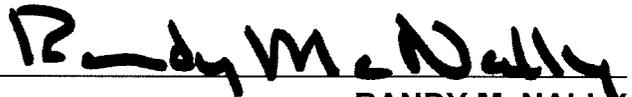
WHEREAS, during those twenty-five years, Connor Concepts has been no stranger to awards and accolades, including the Connors Steak and Seafood Alabama location being ranked among the "Top 100 Best Steakhouses in America" by OpenTable users, and its Turkey Creek location being voted "Best Steakhouse in Tennessee" by *Business Insider*; and

WHEREAS, Connor Concepts has become a staple of the restaurant industry, and its success in the business for these twenty-five years is a testament to its standing in the hearts of Tennesseans and beyond; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor and commend the owners and employees of Connor Concepts on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary, and we extend to them our best wishes for many years of continuing success.

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

ADOPTED: March 16, 2017



RANDY McNALLY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE