

A House resolution

**honoring the extraordinary life and work of
Representative Mary Murphy**

WHEREAS, Mary Murphy represented northeastern Minnesota for 23 terms in the legislature. With more than 45 years of service in state government, she became the second longest-serving member in the Minnesota House of Representatives and the longest-serving woman in either body; and

WHEREAS, Representative Murphy grew up in Hermantown, Minnesota, in a house built as part of a New Deal program to support families during the Great Depression. She remained living in the home as an adult and cited the help her family received as an inspiration for her career in government. The daughter of a steelworker, she went on to become a strong advocate for the labor movement; and

WHEREAS, in 1976 she was elected for her first term, representing parts of St. Louis and Carlton Counties. Her numerous accomplishments over her decades in office include fighting for minimum wage for tipped workers, increasing penalties for domestic abuse and sexual misconduct, and initiating funding for statewide juvenile correction facilities. She chaired the judiciary finance, ethics, energy, and veterans affairs committees, among others. She initiated and authored legislation that funded Head Start, DARE, and other programs for youth; instituted the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College; and established the wind power industry in Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, Representative Murphy also achieved a career as a remarkable teacher. She taught history and social studies at Duluth Central High School for more than 30 years, from 1964 until her retirement in 1997. She received the James Madison Fellowship for Outstanding Teachers, was named one of the Taft Institute's America's 30 Outstanding Teachers of American Government and Two Party Politics, and mentored many young people who later worked alongside her as civic leaders; and

WHEREAS, following the completion of the major Capitol restoration project, Representative Murphy was influential in ensuring the House Chamber had floral arrangements on each side of the rostrum. Leaving her personal mark, a "touch of Mary" will forever be part of the House Chamber; and

WHEREAS, Representative Murphy passed away on December 25, 2024. She will be remembered as an extraordinary teacher who was a role model for her students, as an exceptional human being who represented her constituents with passion and grace, and as a trailblazer who led by example. NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Committee on Rules and Legislative Administration of the House of Representatives of the State of Minnesota that it gratefully acknowledges the exceptional life and service of Representative Mary Murphy.

Dated: April 21, 2025

**Lisa Demuth, Speaker
Minnesota House of Representatives**

**Melissa Hortman, Speaker Emerita
Minnesota House of Representatives**

**Harry Niska, Co-Chair
Rules and Legislative Administration**

**Jamie Long, Co-Chair
Rules and Legislative Administration**