

## ONE HUNDRED FIRST LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SESSION

## LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 93

Introduced by Dubas, 34.

WHEREAS, Merle Elwin Hansen, a nationally known advocate for family farm agriculture, conservation and environmental issues, civil rights, and world peace and a longtime resident of Madison County, Nebraska, died March 27, 2009, at the age of eighty-nine; and

WHEREAS, Hansen served during World War II on transport carriers including the U.S.S. Fuller in the Pacific and North African theaters, was awarded six battle stars, attained the rank of chief yeoman, and was honorably discharged in 1945; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1940s, Hansen worked as a field organizer for the National Farmers Union in South Dakota and Iowa. While organizing a farmer and labor picnic in northeast Iowa, he met his future wife, Lucinda Kramer. They were married on February 18, 1950, and moved back to a farm eleven miles northwest of Newman Grove where they raised their seven children; and

WHEREAS, Hansen served as a Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor, earned county and regional soil conservation awards, and made many presentations to elementary schools on the importance of soil and water conservation. He was also the first in his area to use minimum tillage; and

WHEREAS, ever the innovator, Hansen formed Hansen

Charolais in 1960, a nationally recognized purebred cattle business that sold breeding stock to commercial cattlemen and purebred breeders across the country for twenty-four years. In addition, Hansen built and owned a fertilizer business with his family, raised and sold a wide range of certified seeds, including grasses, legumes, and oats, and also ran a corn, soybean, oat, and alfalfa-farming operation; and

WHEREAS, Hansen's tireless fight for economic justice for family farmers led him to be active in many farm organizations, always building political and organizational coalitions while educating farmers about the importance of understanding farm policy history and the need to work together; and

WHEREAS, Hansen championed many overlapping causes and was active in the Nebraska Farmers Union, the National Farmers Organization, the U.S. Farm Association, the North American Farm Alliance, the National Family Farm Coalition, and Farm Aid; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, the American Corn Growers Association presented Hansen with their Carl L. King award for distinguished service. The award read: "For representing what is really the best in agriculture and never forgetting the importance of maintaining a strong voice for the needs of farmers"; and

WHEREAS, Hansen was active in the Democratic Party at the county, state, and national levels and became Jesse Jackson's agricultural advisor, heavily influencing his farm and rural policies for his 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns; and

WHEREAS, Hansen was one of the founding members of Rural Nebraskans for Peace in May of 1967, which later was integrated into Nebraskans for Peace; and

WHEREAS, Hansen was featured in articles in many national publications, including USA Today, The New York Times, and Ms. Magazine, as well as many documentary films on rural issues; and

WHEREAS, across the country and around the world, Hansen made hundreds of speeches and was a mentor to countless younger leaders and activists; and

WHEREAS, to his many friends and family, Hansen was known for his keen sense of humor, good stories, historical and political insight, personal warmth, disarming smile, unyielding sense of justice and fairness, progressive politics, and his skills as a marksman.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the Legislature extends its condolences to the family of Merle Hansen.

2. That a copy of this resolution be sent to the family of Merle Hansen.