

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 27

Introduced by Scheer, 19.

WHEREAS, on March 2, 2019, the NEBRASKAland Foundation will present the Distinguished NEBRASKAlander Award, recognizing Nebraskans who have distinguished themselves and the state, to Jennifer and Ray O'Connor at the annual Statehood Day Dinner held in the Nebraska State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer and Ray O'Connor have transformed Central Nebraska, particularly the Highway 281 corridor in and around Grand Island, into an economic force with amenities that attract talent and business to the area. Ray's vision and planning abilities are only exceeded by his genuine humility and generosity. Ray has resurrected motels, restaurants, and storefronts from near failure to fabulous success. Jennifer's tireless volunteer work with local charitable organizations is renowned; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer graduated from Grand Island Senior High School and from the University of Nebraska at Kearney with a Bachelor of Science in business administration; and

WHEREAS, Ray graduated from Bishop Heelan Catholic High School in Sioux City, Iowa, and attended Wayne State College before enlisting in the U.S. Army to serve in Vietnam, returning to finish college and earn a Master of Social Work degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer and Ray met in Grand Island where she served as recreation director at the Grand Island Veterans Home. They married in 1975, forming a formidable team; and

WHEREAS, Ray succeeded in founding the Olympic Village Shoe Store, rehabilitating a failing Wendy's restaurant and turning it into the 8th best Wendy's in the world, partnering in other restaurants, and creating a thriving real estate business; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer has served her community as a trustee for the Catholic Diocese of Grand Island and volunteers extensively to organize and raise funds to make the State Fair in Grand Island a great success; and

WHEREAS, Ray has served his community through the Grand Island Economic Development Corporation, Heartland Event Center, the Grow Grand Island Initiative, Central Community College Foundation, the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, and the Hall County Convention and Visitors Bureau; and

WHEREAS, Jennifer and Ray have three children, Ryan, Sean, and Kelli, and six grandchildren.

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

1. That the Legislature congratulates Jennifer and Ray O'Connor as recipients of the Distinguished NEBRASKAlander Award and extends its appreciation for their service to the State of Nebraska.

2. That a copy of this resolution be sent to Jennifer and Ray O'Connor.