

SR-101, As Adopted by Senate, November 29, 2011

Senators Hildenbrand and Jansen offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 101.

A resolution offered as a memorial to the life and accomplishments of Frederik Gerhard Hendrik Meijer.

Whereas, It is with deep sadness that we have learned of the passing of Fred Meijer, an innovative businessman, outstanding philanthropist, and dedicated member of the community. With genuine respect for his legacy of accomplishment, we join with the Grand Rapids community, West Michigan, and the entire state in extending our deepest condolences to his family and many friends; and

Whereas, Fred Meijer was born on December 7, 1919, on his family's farm in Greenville, Michigan. His early life was spent in Greenville, where he worked on the family farm and delivered milk door to door by horse-drawn wagon. In the midst of the Great Depression in 1934, he and his father made a decision that would set into motion the eventual creation of the modern-day supermarket. The Meijer family's first grocery store opened in Greenville in 1934. In 1942, a second store was opened in Cedar Springs. Then in 1949, a third store was added in the city of Grand Rapids. The Meijer family was quickly developing a strong reputation for providing quality groceries at a fair and responsible price; and

Whereas, In 1962, Fred Meijer embarked on an unprecedented business experiment: offering both groceries and general-discount merchandise in one store. With this, the modern-day supermarket was created. The store's model was an instant success, and more stores followed throughout Michigan and eventually into adjacent states. Fred Meijer's success has led to Meijer stores being ranked as the fifteenth-largest private company in the country. The success of this company also has led to the employment of roughly 60,000 individuals. To this day, the business remains a private, family-run operation, despite countless efforts to go public; and

Whereas, The importance of Fred Meijer to keep his business here in Michigan and in his family is not truly appreciated until one looks at the countless employers and their employees who do business with Meijer each and every day. The vast economic impact this company has had here in Michigan is truly awe-inspiring. Certainly, the Grand Rapids region and the entire state are the beneficiaries of Fred Meijer's longstanding commitment to Michigan; and

Whereas, Fred Meijer was not only a prudent businessman, but he was also an engaged community activist and philanthropist. He often tackled social and cultural issues at a time when most were inclined to keep with the status quo. He was active in the Grand Rapids Urban League, where he tirelessly advocated for civil rights and equality. Fred Meijer also shared his vast wealth with many organizations, such as Spectrum Health, Grand Valley State University, and countless others throughout West Michigan. His philanthropy is responsible for such landmarks as the Fred Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail, Pickeral Lake Fred Meijer Nature Preserve, and numerous others; and

Whereas, Fred Meijer is survived by his wife Lena and sons Hank, Doug, and Mark. To this day, it is family that reflects the values and ideals instilled by Fred Meijer throughout the years; and

Whereas, The life of Frederik Gerhard Hendrik Meijer is a testament to the power of hard work, dedication, and commitment to his business, family, and the entire state. We are certainly grateful for his achievements, which will continue to have an impact on many people across Michigan and beyond in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we hereby offer our words of praise as a memorial for Frederik Gerhard Hendrik Meijer. May his family find comfort in their faith and their memories of this fine man, his life's work, and the many people whose lives he touched; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the family of Frederik Gerhard Hendrik Meijer as a token of our highest esteem.