

2003 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 31

1 **Relating to:** the life and public service of Philip S. Habermann, the first executive
2 secretary of the Legislative Council.

3 Whereas, Philip S. Habermann, the first executive secretary of the Legislative
4 Council, passed away on February 11, 2003, at the age of 89; and

5 Whereas, Mr. Habermann was born and raised in Lodi, Wisconsin, and followed
6 a path of education and experience that suited him well for his later employment
7 with the legislature, including an undergraduate degree from the University of
8 Wisconsin in economics and taxation, service as assistant secretary of the League of
9 Wisconsin Municipalities and as executive secretary of the Maine Municipal
10 Association, service in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946, a degree from the University
11 of Wisconsin Law School, and work in the private practice of law; and

12 Whereas, in 1947, the legislature created the Legislative Council as a means
13 of using study committees and professional staff to enhance the legislature's ability
14 to address and find competent solutions for the pressing issues of the day, and to have

1 legislation drafted in advance of the session to allow more time for consideration of
2 the proposals by the legislature as a whole; and

3 Whereas, Mr. Habermann, at age 34, was chosen as the first executive secretary
4 of the Legislative Council from among 18 candidates; and

5 Whereas, Mr. Habermann guided the Legislative Council through its critical
6 first year, a time when success was not assured, as stated in the *Milwaukee Journal*
7 upon the commencement of the first interim studies: “The Council idea itself is on
8 trial in Wisconsin at this time. On the showing made will depend whether or not the
9 Council will be retained as a permanent part of our legislative machinery.”; and

10 Whereas, Mr. Habermann labored together with 2 secretarial assistants in one
11 of the round hearing rooms in the State Capitol, space he shared with the Highway
12 Committee; and

13 Whereas, Mr. Habermann managed and supported the work of 11 active study
14 committees, developed procedures for the conduct of study committees that continue
15 to be used today, conducted a pre-session conference for the education of new
16 legislators, and completed a 140–page report on law enforcement in Wisconsin which
17 laid the groundwork for a highway safety program; and

18 Whereas, Mr. Habermann moved on after one year with the Legislative Council
19 to continue his institution–building, as the first director of the Wisconsin State Bar
20 Association, an organization that he served as director until his retirement in 1974;
21 and

22 Whereas, upon the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the
23 Legislative Council, celebrated in 1997, Mr. Habermann sent a letter with several
24 comments, including this fond recollection: “It was great to be on the ground floor
25 and to help get the Council off to a sound start in the right direction. I look back with

1 great pleasure to those days and the many friends that I made in the legislature.”;
2 now, therefore, be it

3 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the members of the
4 Wisconsin legislature commemorate the life and public service of Philip S.
5 Habermann, in particular the contribution that he made to the Wisconsin
6 legislature, express sorrow at his death, and extend their condolences to his family
7 and friends.

8 (END)