



## 2009 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 53

1       **Relating to:** the life and public service of former Congressman Reverend Robert J.  
2           Cornell.

3           Whereas, Father Robert J. Cornell was born on December 16, 1919, in  
4       Gladstone, Michigan, and died on May 10, 2009, in De Pere, Wisconsin; and

5           Whereas, in 1928, the Cornell family moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin, where  
6       Robert became a member of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral parish and was very active  
7       in parish affairs; and

8           Whereas, in 1937, he was named the outstanding Catholic boy of Green Bay;  
9       and

10          Whereas, Robert J. Cornell joined the Norbertine Order in 1938 and was  
11       ordained a priest in the Norbertine Order on June 17, 1944; and

12          Whereas, he received his B.A. degree from St. Norbert College in De Pere,  
13       Wisconsin, in 1941, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from The Catholic University of  
14       America in Washington, D.C., in 1957; and

1           Whereas, Father Cornell's academic assignments included serving on the  
2 faculty at St. Norbert High School and later at Abbot Pennings High School in De  
3 Pere, Wisconsin, and Southeast Catholic High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,  
4 where he was also vice principal; and

5           Whereas, Father Cornell was a professor of history and government at St.  
6 Norbert College throughout most of his long teaching career and was the Dean of  
7 Students at the college for five years; and

8           Whereas, Father Cornell taught history at The Catholic University in  
9 Washington, D.C., and in San Antonio, Texas; and

10           Whereas, Father Cornell was chairman of the 8th Congressional District and  
11 was a member of the State Administrative Committee of the Democratic Party of  
12 Wisconsin from 1969 to 1974; and

13           Whereas, Father Cornell was elected to the 94th Congress and 95th Congress,  
14 serving from January 3, 1975 to January 3, 1979, as the U.S. representative from the  
15 8th Congressional District of Wisconsin; and

16           Whereas, while serving in Congress, most of Father Cornell's congressional  
17 salary was used for internships in his Washington, D.C., office for residents of  
18 northeast Wisconsin and for student aid at all schools of higher education in the 8th  
19 Congressional District; and

20           Whereas, his influence and community involvement was not limited to the  
21 classroom and politics: Father Cornell directed activities for the youth of the area,  
22 especially rock concerts with nationally famous entertainers, and later he handled  
23 country and rock shows in Green Bay with the proceeds being used for scholarships  
24 for St. Norbert College students and graduates; and

1           Whereas, in his later years, Father Cornell served as chaplain at Nicolet  
2 Terrace in De Pere; and

3           Whereas, Father Cornell is the author of the standard work on the role of  
4 Theodore Roosevelt in the great anthracite coal strike of 1902, and his political  
5 memoirs, “*Is There a Priest in the House?*”, as well numerous articles on historical  
6 and educational topics for encyclopedias and magazines; and

7           Whereas, Father Cornell co-authored a book on the history of St. Norbert  
8 College as part of the Centennial celebration in 1998; and

9           Whereas, Father Cornell was included among “45 Who Made a Difference” in  
10 the first century and one-half of Wisconsin Catholic history in 1998; and

11           Whereas, Father Cornell was a member of the board of trustees of Gallaudet  
12 College, a member of the Wisconsin Supreme Court Commission on Judicial Ethics,  
13 and founding member of Labor Historians and listed as a Distinguished Member of  
14 the Organization of American Historians; now, therefore, be it

15           ***Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That*** the members of the  
16 Wisconsin legislature find it fitting to commend the devoted public service that  
17 Father Robert J. Cornell contributed to this state and his community and recognize  
18 his accomplishments as a priest, legislator, and a citizen; and, be it further

19           ***Resolved, That*** the assembly chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint  
20 resolution to Father Cornell’s niece, Patti Heil of Centennial, Colorado; nephew,  
21 William Cornell of Arlington, Virginia; and St. Norbert College in De Pere,  
22 Wisconsin.

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(END)