2021 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 126


Relating to: commemorating the exemplary life and service of R. Richard “Dick” Wagner.

Whereas, Roland Richard “Dick” Wagner was born on September 29, 1943, in Dayton, Ohio, and passed away on December 13, 2021, in Madison, Wisconsin; and

Whereas, Dick Wagner moved to Wisconsin in 1965 to attend graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he graduated with a Master of Arts in 1967 and his Ph.D. in 1971; and

Whereas, until his retirement from state service in 2005, Dick Wagner served Wisconsin for 33 years, including as a budget analyst at the Department of Administration; and

Whereas, Dick Wagner was elected the first openly gay member of the Dane County Board in 1980 and served until 1994, including four years as Chair of the Board; and
Whereas, Dick Wagner was instrumental in enacting the City of Madison’s gay rights ordinance in 1974 and Dane County’s nondiscrimination ordinance in 1980, which paved the way for Wisconsin’s statewide nondiscrimination law in 1982; and

Whereas, Dick Wagner’s commitment to leadership extended far beyond his own political career through mentorship, advocacy, and service on countless community groups and boards; and

Whereas, Dick Wagner authored two groundbreaking books recounting the history of LGBTQ Wisconsinites, “We’ve Been Here All Along: Wisconsin’s Early Gay History” and “Coming Out, Moving Forward: Wisconsin’s Recent Gay History,” in 2019 and 2020, respectively; and

Whereas, Dick Wagner was recognized for his public service as the first recipient of Madison’s Jeffrey Clay Erlanger Civility in Public Discourse Award in 2007, and the City of Madison declared June 25, 2019, as R. Richard Wagner Day; and

Whereas, Dick Wagner was known to friends and constituents as a kind and generous person, who always treated others with dignity and respect; and

Whereas, Dick Wagner’s life and influence will continue to be an inspiration through his books, his work, his bravery, and the work of those whom he mentored; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin Legislature recognize and commemorate the exemplary life and service of R. Richard “Dick” Wagner.

(END)