February 5, 2021 – Introduced by Senators SMITH and BERNIER, cosponsored by Representatives EMERSON, JAMES, PETRYK and SUMMERFIELD. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

Relating to: honoring the life and public service of Senator Davis A. Donnelly.

Whereas, Davis A. Donnelly was a veteran, public servant, entrepreneur, and dedicated husband, father, and grandfather; and

Whereas, Donnelly was born in Augusta, Wisconsin, to Reverend William Donnelly and his wife Margret on March 9, 1927; and

Whereas, after joining the U.S. Navy at 17, he served during World War II in both the European and Pacific theaters and served once again during the Korean War; and

Whereas, after completing his military service and working as a salmon fisherman, machinist, and salesman, Donnelly took advantage of the G.I. Bill to attend Eau Claire State College, where he graduated in 1954, and the University of Wisconsin Law School, where he earned his law degree in 1957; and

Whereas, in 1956, after working as a clerk in the Wisconsin Assembly and while still in law school, Donnelly won a seat in the Wisconsin Senate; and
Whereas, Donnelly proudly represented the people of Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties during the two terms he served in the senate; and

Whereas, during his time as a senator, he served his rural constituents by sitting on the Senate Committee on Agriculture and championed many causes he cared about passionately, from raising the drinking age to improving state camping facilities; and

Whereas, in addition to practicing law, Donnelly established the Roman Inn Italian Restaurant in Eau Claire and created a line of frozen pizzas, Roma Pizza, that he sold to grocery stores across the upper Midwest for almost 40 years; and

Whereas, Donnelly’s pizza business became so successful that, by the late 1990s, the company he established to produce and market his pies, Dadco Food Products, employed approximately 200 people in Eau Claire; and

Whereas, after selling Dadco in 2000, Donnelly remained active overseeing other businesses he launched until age 90; and

Whereas, Donnelly was a loving husband to his wife Marilyn Ashley, whom he married in 1952, and a loving father to their three children, Mark, Todd, and Lisa; and

Whereas, Davis Donnelly passed away on September 15, 2020, at age 93; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin Legislature salute the life and public service of Davis A. Donnelly and mourn his passing; and, be it further

Resolved, That the senate chief clerk shall provide a copy of this joint resolution to the family of Davis A. Donnelly.

(END)