



SPONSOR: Sen. McBride
Sens. Bonini, Brown, Cloutier, Delcollo, Ennis, Hansen,
Hocker, Lawson, Lockman, Lopez, McDowell, Paradee,
Pettyjohn, Poore, Richardson, Sokola, Sturgeon,
Townsend, Walsh, Wilson

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
150th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 44

HONORING DELAWARE'S SENIOR SENATOR, THE HONORABLE HARRIS BROWN MCDOWELL, III, UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE SENATE AFTER SOME 44 YEARS OF SERVICE.

1 WHEREAS, Harris B. McDowell, III was first elected to the Delaware State Senate to represent the First Senate
2 District in 1976, defeating popular former Republican State Representative Kermit Justice in a race seen as something of an
3 upset, the previous incumbent having been Republican Senator Michael N. Castle; and

4 WHEREAS, in becoming a Delaware State Senator, Harris B. McDowell, III was following in a long family
5 tradition, having been preceded in the Senate by his grandfather, Middletown veterinarian Dr. Harris Brown McDowell, Sr.,
6 who served in the 102nd and 103rd General Assemblies from 1922 to 1926, and his father, Harris B. McDowell, Jr., who
7 served in the 112th and 113th General Assemblies from 1942 to 1946, before going on to serve as Delaware Secretary of
8 State during the first term of Governor Elbert N. Carvel and then serving five terms as Delaware's lone U.S. Congressman;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, both "our" Senator McDowell and his father served in the present Senate chamber at Legislative Hall,
11 while the first senator of that name, Harris B. McDowell, Sr., served in the old Senate chamber in the Old State House on
12 the Dover Green; and

13 WHEREAS, over his many years among us, Senator McDowell and his remarkable wife, Sunee, and their
14 children, Kendall and Harris IV, have become greatly beloved members of what we often think of as "the Legislative Hall
15 Family," Kendall and Harris growing up to become fine young adults; and

16 WHEREAS, throughout his time in the Senate, Senator McDowell has shown both a hands-on "stick-to-it-iveness"
17 and a love for people and especially for people with special needs, which may perhaps be best exemplified by a 1984
18 Wilmington Morning News column by Bill Frank, entitled "Help for the handicapped citizen," in which Frank recounts the
19 story of how Senator McDowell was contacted on primary day by a wheelchair-bound voter trying to get access to cast a
20 ballot at a polling place at Wilmington's Immanuel Episcopal Church; and

21 WHEREAS, the man, unable to get his wheelchair up the steps into the building to vote and not getting any help
22 from election officials to make this possible, other than having them offer to have him carried bodily into the building,

23 which solution he found demeaning and unacceptable, contacted Senator McDowell, who, after striking out with election
24 officials himself, contacted the rector of the church at his home in nearby Pennsylvania and got his permission to build a
25 temporary ramp into the building; and

26 WHEREAS, the senator got an architect friend to sketch a design for a simple ramp to be mounted on the church
27 steps and then found a carpenter friend who was building a home in the neighborhood, from whom he borrowed lumber,
28 nails, hammer and saw, and proceeded with help from other friends to build a ramp, which the voter then used to access the
29 building to cast his vote with appropriate independence and dignity, after which Senator McDowell dismantled the ramp
30 and vowed to take the matter to the General Assembly the following January and get legislation to prevent similar
31 occurrences in the future; and

32 WHEREAS, this story is so wonderfully typical of the independent free spirit, creativity, and sincerity of this
33 remarkable man who has accomplished so much during his nearly four and a half decades in the Senate, from leading
34 efforts to establish a separate Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, and working to establish the
35 "SEED" and "Inspire" college tuition grant programs for Delaware high school graduates; and

36 WHEREAS, this statesman of such great vision led efforts in 2007 to establish the Delaware Sustainable Energy
37 Utility (DESEU) as a unique nonprofit organization offering a one-stop resource, through its "Energize Delaware"
38 initiative, to help residents and businesses save money through clean energy and efficiency, frequently at little or no cost,
39 becoming the first such body in the United States, and now being replicated in several other communities around the world;
40 and

41 WHEREAS, in recent years, Senator McDowell has served as chair of the Senate Finance Committee and as co-
42 chair of the Joint Finance Committee, helping to manage state finances ably and well, and not incidentally, dealing at the
43 twilight of his Senate career with what is certainly one of the greatest financial challenges ever to face our state and our
44 nation, the economic downturn caused by the worldwide COVID -19 pandemic;

45 NOW, THEREFORE:

46 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 150th General Assembly of the State of Delaware that the members do
47 hereby wish a fond farewell to our dear friend, Harris B. McDowell, III, as he prepares to retire from the duties he has held
48 with such spirit and vision and dedication as Delaware's First District State Senator where he has been a friend and
49 inspiration to so many of us, both in the Senate and in the larger community, expressing the hope that he and his dear wife,
50 Sunee, will enjoy many years of peaceful retirement in happiness and in health.

51 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Senator McDowell upon its
52 passage.

SYNOPSIS

This Senate Resolution pays tribute to Delaware's senior senator, Harris B. McDowell, III, upon his retirement from the Senate after some 44 years of exemplary service.

Author: Senator McBride