SENATE RESOLUTION

8708

By Senators Pedersen, Das, Braun, Wagoner, Kuderer, Fortunato, Nguyen, Hunt, Takko, Salomon, Sheldon, Hasegawa, Conway, Randall, Carlyle, Wilson, C., Short, McCoy, Rolfes, Becker, Frockt, Darneille, Stanford, Keiser, Lovelett, Van De Wege, Honeyford, King, O'Ban, Padden, Schoesler, Hawkins, Rivers, Cleveland, Hobbs, Dhingra, Saldaña, Mullet, Liias, Walsh, Warnick, Wilson, L., Holy, Ericksen, Zeiger, Muzzall, Billig, Wellman, and Brown

WHEREAS, James R. Ellis, distinguished attorney, committed civic activist, and beloved family man, passed away following a lifetime of dedicated public service; and

WHEREAS, Historylink.org reports that "James R. Ellis never held public office . . . yet, as a citizen activist for more than half a century, he left a bigger footprint on Seattle and King County than perhaps any other single individual"; and

WHEREAS, Before embarking on a career as a community leader and lawyer, Mr. Ellis graduated from Franklin High School in Seattle and Yale University, served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, and resolved to honor the life of his brother Bob, who was killed in the war, by improving the lives of others; and

WHEREAS, Following graduation from the University of Washington School of Law, Mr. Ellis joined the Seattle law firm of Preston, Thorgrimson & Horowitz and developed his specialty and expertise in municipal bonds; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ellis married the love of his life, Mary Lou, and together raised four children at their home on the shores of Lake Washington, enjoying the magnificent outdoors of the Pacific Northwest; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ellis, thanks to his tireless advocacy for a new form of regional government to address local problems, became instrumental in the formation of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle, responsible for the cleanup of Lake Washington and creation of an innovative countywide transit system; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of his involvement in cleaning up Lake Washington, Mr. Ellis was appointed to the National Water Commission and was offered the position of the first director of the Environmental Protection Agency, eventually declining in the belief he could do more good staying in Washington; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ellis's unwavering efforts led to the establishment of The Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, responsible for creating the permanent greenway, stretching from the Puget Sound to the Kittitas foothills along the I-90 corridor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ellis shaped the lives of the people of Washington by improving public infrastructure, parks, trails, and the accessibility of resources to the public and underserved through his roles as leader of Forward Thrust, trustee of the Ford Foundation, regent for the University of Washington, and first chairman of the Washington State Convention Center;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate express its deepest condolences to the family, friends, colleagues, and others whose lives were improved by the public service of James Reed Ellis, and acknowledge his invaluable contributions to the state of Washington; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the family of James R. Ellis.