

House Resolution 889

By: Representative Holcomb of the 101st

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring and commending the life, leadership, and legacy of Wyatt Thomas Johnson Jr. for
2 his extraordinary contributions to journalism, civic life, and public service in Georgia and
3 across the nation as well as for his resolute efforts to champion mental health awareness,
4 strengthen democratic institutions, and promote informed citizenship; and for other purposes.

5 WHEREAS, Tom Johnson, born Wyatt Thomas Johnson Jr. on September 30, 1941, in
6 Macon, Georgia, has led a life dedicated to truth, service, and compassion, rising from
7 humble beginnings to become one of the most respected figures in American journalism and
8 a transformative leader in both public and private spheres; and

9 WHEREAS, Johnson's career began as a young reporter at *The Macon Telegraph*, an
10 opportunity made possible by the generosity and mentorship of publisher Peyton Anderson,
11 who recognized Johnson's early dedication, talent, and integrity; and

12 WHEREAS, with the support of scholarships from Anderson, Johnson earned a journalism
13 degree from the University of Georgia and later an MBA from Harvard Business School,
14 achievements that laid the foundation for a remarkable professional life defined by purpose
15 and principle; and

16 WHEREAS, Johnson served in the White House under President Lyndon B. Johnson as a
17 Special Assistant and Deputy Press Secretary, during one of the most complex and
18 consequential chapters in American history; and

19 WHEREAS, his closeness to President Johnson and his presence at pivotal historical
20 moments deepened his lifelong commitment to public service, civil rights, and effective
21 governance; and

22 WHEREAS, transitioning from public service to journalism, Johnson went on to serve with
23 distinction as publisher and CEO of *The Dallas Times Herald* and later as publisher and
24 president of the *Los Angeles Times*, where under his stewardship the paper won six Pulitzer
25 Prizes and reached its highest levels of readership, quality, and impact; and

26 WHEREAS, in 1990, Johnson was recruited by *CNN* founder Ted Turner to lead the *Cable*
27 *News Network* as President during a critical era of global change, including the Gulf War and
28 the emergence of 24-hour news broadcasting; and

29 WHEREAS, under his visionary leadership, *CNN* expanded to a worldwide audience,
30 launched *CNN International* and CNN.com, and became a global standard-bearer for
31 real-time, credible journalism; and

32 WHEREAS, throughout his media career, Johnson was a steady voice of calm, accuracy, and
33 ethical responsibility, ensuring that news was not only fast but fact-based, and that journalists
34 upheld the highest standards of public trust and democratic accountability; and

35 WHEREAS, Johnson has served on a multitude of boards and foundations dedicated to
36 education, global development, civic leadership, and journalism excellence, including the

37 Rockefeller Foundation, the Knight Foundation, the Mayo Clinic Foundation, and the
38 Peabody Awards Board of Jurors, as well as leadership roles with the Lyndon Baines
39 Johnson Foundation, the Trilateral Commission, and the Council on Foreign Relations; and

40 WHEREAS, despite personal achievements, Johnson has never wavered in his advocacy for
41 those often overlooked, including through his courageous public dialogue around his own
42 battle with clinical depression; and

43 WHEREAS, in sharing his experience, Johnson broke down stigma, empowered countless
44 others to seek help, and became a national advocate for improving access to mental health
45 resources; and

46 WHEREAS, Johnson has returned time and again to his Georgia roots, investing in his home
47 state through educational programs, mentoring, and civic initiatives aimed at building future
48 generations of ethical leaders and responsible journalists; and

49 WHEREAS, his legacy reflects not only professional excellence but also humility,
50 perseverance, public-mindedness, and compassion, making him an enduring role model for
51 Georgians and Americans alike.

52 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
53 the members of this body honor and commend Wyatt Thomas Johnson Jr. for his
54 extraordinary contributions to journalism, democracy, mental health awareness, and public
55 service, and extend their deepest appreciation for his tireless efforts to build a more informed,
56 compassionate, and just society.

57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
58 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available to Tom Johnson and his
59 family.