

House Resolution

No. 28

Introduced by Assembly Member Nunez

March 28, 2008

House Resolution No. 28—Relative to the Arthur Ohnimus Collection.

1 WHEREAS, The Assembly is in receipt of a generous donation
2 made by the late Assembly Chief Clerk Arthur Ohnimus and his
3 wife Bernice Wemple Ohnimus Crutcher that consists of historical
4 items; and

5 WHEREAS, The items in the collection offer an insight into
6 the history of the Legislature, San Francisco politics, California
7 political figures of the 20th century, and the Ohnimus and Wemple
8 families; and

9 WHEREAS, Arthur Allen Ohnimus was the son of Louis Juan
10 Ohnimus and Grace D. Pierce, and was born on June 3, 1893, in
11 San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood. He was raised in
12 the Western Addition, and attended Hearst Grammar School,
13 Sacred Heart College, and Saint Ignatius College; and

14 WHEREAS, Arthur Ohnimus's father was a San Francisco city
15 official, and also was a wildlife expert, who built the Stowe Lake
16 Boat House in Golden Gate Park in 1894. His father was also
17 superintendent of the Woodward Gardens Amusement Park and
18 the Monarch grizzly bear exhibit; and

19 WHEREAS, Arthur Ohnimus's mother, Grace (Pierce) Ohnimus,
20 was a famous actress and later managed the boat house in Golden
21 Gate Park for over 30 years; and

22 WHEREAS, Arthur Ohnimus was employed by the Assembly
23 beginning in 1915 as Insurance Committee clerk and subsequently,

1 in 1917, as a stenographer and later as a bookkeeper, and in 1919
2 and 1921, Arthur Ohnimus was employed as Assistant Minute
3 Clerk and thereafter, later in 1921, he was elected Minute Clerk;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, In 1921, Arthur Ohnimus graduated with a law
6 degree from Saint Ignatius College in San Francisco and was
7 admitted to the State Bar of California in 1922; and

8 WHEREAS, Arthur Ohnimus was first elected Chief Clerk of
9 the Assembly in 1923, and due to the part-time nature of legislative
10 sessions at that time, he held simultaneous employment as a Deputy
11 District Attorney in San Francisco from 1924 to 1944 and as a
12 Deputy Attorney General from 1944 to 1957; and

13 WHEREAS, As Chief Clerk of the Assembly, Arthur Ohnimus
14 oversaw the modernization of the Legislature, including the
15 installation of the electronic voting system, public address system,
16 and increased legislative staffing levels in the postwar era; and

17 WHEREAS, The expanding state population and increased
18 volume and complexity of legislation prompted the Assembly
19 Committee on Rules in 1957, to appoint Arthur Ohnimus as its
20 first Chief Administrative Officer, the Assembly's first full-time
21 staff position; and

22 WHEREAS, As Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Clerk,
23 Arthur Ohnimus created the Assembly's first job and salary
24 classifications, supervised all Assembly employees and some of
25 the first Assembly Fellows, argued for full-time legislative staff
26 to cope with the growing population of the state; and oversaw the
27 construction of the Capitol building annex; and

28 WHEREAS, During his tenure as Chief Clerk of the Assembly,
29 Arthur Ohnimus served in a nonpartisan capacity under four
30 Democratic and eight Republican Speakers; and

31 WHEREAS, Arthur Ohnimus retired at 70 years of age on
32 October 4, 1963, after serving 45 years as an Assembly employee,
33 with 37 cumulative years of service as Chief Clerk; and

34 WHEREAS, Recognizing his expertise in parliamentary
35 procedures, the Assembly Committee on Rules in February 1964,
36 contracted with Arthur Ohnimus to consult with the committee in
37 the revision of the Assembly Rules; and

38 WHEREAS, Arthur Ohnimus, only two years into his retirement,
39 died on March 13, 1965, at 71 years of age; and

1 WHEREAS, The future wife of Arthur Ohnimus, Bernice
2 Marguerite Wemple, was born in Milford, California on February
3 26, 1913, and graduated from Lassen Union High School on June
4 12, 1930; and

5 WHEREAS, Under the crossfiling system, Bernice’s father,
6 N.V. Wemple, served as a Republican and as a Democratic
7 Assembly Member representing Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, and
8 Sierra Counties in the 46th Regular Session of the Legislature
9 (1925–26) and the 47th Regular Session of the Legislature
10 (1927–28); and

11 WHEREAS, Bernice pursued a career as a secretary, graduating
12 from the Armstrong College of Business Administration with a
13 Private Secretarial Curriculum on April 8, 1932, and was soon
14 hired as a secretary and bookkeeper by the Chrome Alloys
15 Manufacturing Company in Oakland; and

16 WHEREAS, In January 1933, Bernice was employed as a
17 stenographer by the California State Senate, working for Senator
18 Dan E. Williams, 26th Senate District, and Senator John L. Moran,
19 18th Senate District; and

20 WHEREAS, On August 2, 1933, Bernice was hired by the State
21 Board of Equalization, where she would be employed for the next
22 35 years; and

23 WHEREAS, Bernice married Arthur Ohnimus on December
24 27, 1943, in Santa Monica, California; and

25 WHEREAS, For decades, Bernice Ohnimus was affectionately
26 referred to as “Cookie” by her family, friends, and Capitol
27 denizens; and

28 WHEREAS, Arthur Ohnimus was an avid collector of political
29 memorabilia, beginning in his boyhood years in San Francisco at
30 the turn of the century; and

31 WHEREAS, During their 22 years of marriage, Arthur and
32 Bernice Ohnimus collected many legislative documents, mementos,
33 souvenirs, photographs, scrapbooks, and political memorabilia
34 dating back to the 1890s; and

35 WHEREAS, Bernice carefully organized and stored Arthur
36 Ohnimus’s historical items, safekeeping them for the next 42 years;
37 and

38 WHEREAS, Bernice married Anson H. Crutcher, Sr., on June
39 8, 1968, in Reno, Nevada; and

1 WHEREAS, Anson H. Crutcher, Sr. was the former Chief of
2 the State Police and the field representative for State Board of
3 Equalization member Paul R. Leake; and

4 WHEREAS, Bernice Ohnimus Crutcher retired from the State
5 Board of Equalization on August 28, 1968, after having worked
6 for many years for various divisions within the board, including
7 service as secretary to board Member Paul R. Leake; and

8 WHEREAS, Only two years into their marriage, Bernice's
9 husband Anson H. Crutcher, Sr. died on October 10, 1970 in Elko,
10 Nevada at 57 years of age; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1973, the Legislature adopted Assembly
12 Concurrent Resolution 93, directing the Department of General
13 Services to plant a redwood tree in Capitol Park in honor of Arthur
14 Ohnimus; and

15 WHEREAS, In her later years, Bernice lived in Applegate,
16 California and was a lover of horses and the foothills and was
17 cared for by Italene Allen; and

18 WHEREAS, Bernice Ohnimus Crutcher passed away on
19 September 29, 2007, at 94 years of age; and

20 WHEREAS, On November 2, 2007, the Bernice Ohnimus
21 Crutcher Estate, under the guidance of Anson H. Crutcher, Jr.,
22 Lindsay Kayser Hendricks, Steven Kayser, Dana Wemple, and
23 Nancy Wemple, donated the historical collection to the Assembly
24 Office of the Chief Clerk so that it may be archived and used for
25 research; and

26 WHEREAS, This collection includes many important letters,
27 news clippings, political and legislative memorabilia, campaign
28 literature, historic photographs, and personal effects, including a
29 dress made of the Assembly draperies, sewn by Nadene Kayser;
30 now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved that the Assembly of the State of California, That the*
32 *Assembly commends the Bernice Ohnimus Crutcher Estate and*
33 *appreciates the decades of public service that the Ohnimus,*
34 *Wemple, and Crutcher families have dedicated to the people of*
35 *California; and be it further*

36 *Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies*
37 *of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.*

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