

State of Wisconsin



2019 Senate Joint Resolution 4

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: honoring the life and public service of Senator Walter John Chilsen.

Whereas, on December 25, 2018, Walter John Chilsen passed away at the age of 95; and

Whereas, Chilsen served in the Wisconsin State Senate from 1967 to 1991, representing the people of the 29th Senate District; and

Whereas, Chilsen was born in Merrill, Wisconsin, in 1923 to Margaret and Walter Burt Chilsen; and

Whereas, during World War II, Chilsen enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, serving as a bombardier on a B-24 bomber and climbing the ranks to lieutenant; and

Whereas, Chilsen was injured when his plane crashed into the ocean near Saipan during the Battle of Iwo Jima; and

Whereas, Chilsen helped other crew members reach safety following the crash and was later awarded the Purple Heart; and

Whereas, after the war, Chilsen attended Northwestern University and then graduated from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. He then went on to pursue a career in acting as well as in radio broadcasting at WLIN radio in Merrill; and

Whereas, in 1954, Chilsen became the news director and anchor for WSAU-TV — now known as WSAW-TV — when the station signed on the air as Wausau's first television station; and

Whereas, over his 17-year career in radio and television broadcasting, Chilsen became Central Wisconsin's most trusted and authoritative news voice and, in 2005, he was inducted into the Wisconsin Broadcasting Museum's Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, during his 24 years in the Senate, Chilsen served on a variety of committees and was recognized for his accomplishments on behalf of senior citizens, agriculture and rural development, and environmental issues; and

Whereas, Chilsen was known in the legislature as a kind and thoughtful leader, a skilled orator, and a consensus builder; and

Whereas, after retiring from the State Senate, Chilsen served on the board of the town of Weston for 17 years before stepping down at the age of 94 in December 2017; and

Whereas, Chilsen and his wife of 65 years, Rose, were involved in many volunteer activities and were instrumental in the founding of The Neighbors' Place, a Wausau community center that provides food and other basic necessities for those in need; and

Whereas, Chilsen's beloved wife Rose, who passed away on April 4, 2019, exactly 100 days after her husband, saw to it that Chilsen was elected to the State Senate for five terms; and

Whereas, Chilsen is survived by his eight children and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren; 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 Walter John Chilsen and mourn his passing; and, be it further

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

Representative Robin J. Vos
Speaker of the Assembly

Senator Roger Roth
President of the Senate

Date

Jeffrey Renk
Senate Chief Clerk