

By: Eissler

H.R. No. 193

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Lone Star State has lost a beloved figure with
2 the death of legendary Texas cowgirl Connie Douglas Reeves, who
3 died on August 17, 2003, at the age of 101, having continued to ride
4 until the very end of her full and generous life; and

5 WHEREAS, Mrs. Reeves, a native of Eagle Pass, was born in 1901
6 to Ada Wallace Douglas and state district judge W. C. Douglas, and
7 family legend has it that she was destined to lead the life of an
8 equestrian from infancy; her mother, sensing a perfect Western
9 photo opportunity, first placed Connie on horseback when she was
10 still a baby, before she could even sit up by herself; as a toddler,
11 Connie rode in the saddle seated in front of her mother, and she
12 owned her first horse at the age of five, thanks to a generous gift
13 from her grandfather, an avid horseman in his own right and a
14 respected member of the English gentry; and

15 WHEREAS, Having quickly mastered both the English and Western
16 styles of riding, she spent a happy childhood in West Texas, later
17 moving with her family to San Antonio; she graduated from the Alamo
18 City's Main Avenue High School in 1919 and only three years later
19 received her undergraduate degree from Texas Woman's University in
20 Denton; and

21 WHEREAS, Impressing both teachers and classmates alike with
22 her intelligence and integrity, Mrs. Reeves then pursued her dream
23 of becoming an attorney; she was one of the first women to graduate
24 from The University of Texas School of Law and, by some accounts,

1 would probably have been one of the youngest women lawyers in the
2 United States had not the Great Depression forced her to take
3 another career path; and

4 WHEREAS, This new path led back to her old high school in San
5 Antonio, where she taught classes and achieved another first, that
6 of organizing the first pep squad in the state of Texas; she
7 ultimately transferred to Thomas Jefferson High School, a campus
8 opened in 1932, where she founded the famed Lassos drill team; and

9 WHEREAS, While working in the classroom and on the practice
10 field, she developed a profound appreciation of the power of
11 education to change lives, especially the lives of young women; she
12 also yearned to return to her childhood passion for equestrian
13 sports, and melding this enthusiasm with her skills as an
14 instructor, she took the courageous step of opening her own
15 business, where she could teach San Antonio children how to care for
16 and ride horses; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1936, despite the success of her riding stable,
18 she agreed to join the staff of Waldemar Camp for Girls as a riding
19 instructor, and it was with this decision that she would begin her
20 journey toward becoming the quintessential Texas cowgirl; over the
21 course of the next 66 years, during which time she assumed
22 leadership of the camp's entire riding program, she taught an
23 estimated 30,000 Texas girls to ride, and she instilled in
24 generations of women an appreciation for equestrianism and an
25 enduring sense of self-confidence; and

26 WHEREAS, The camp also brought her to the Texas Hill Country,
27 where she would remain for the rest of her life; her love for the

1 area's clear skies and wide-open vistas was shared by her husband of
2 more than 40 years, Jack Reeves, with whom she worked a successful
3 ranch near Junction and who is remembered in her memoir *I Married a*
4 *Cowboy*; following his death and after her official retirement from
5 the Waldemar riding school, Mrs. Reeves still taught riding on an
6 informal basis, and she became the first woman in history to receive
7 the Chester A. Reynolds Memorial Award, named after the founder of
8 the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City;
9 at the age of 100 she proudly rode in the parade marking the Fort
10 Worth opening of the National Cowgirl Museum, where she is
11 enshrined in the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame, and she received the
12 Freedom Forum's 2002 Free Spirit award; and

13 WHEREAS, Her oft-repeated motto, "Always saddle your own
14 horse," has become a maxim and guiding principle for independent,
15 strong, and adventurous women everywhere; her popularity is
16 international in scope, and tributes have poured in from newspapers
17 around the globe, including those in Europe, Africa, and the South
18 Pacific; and

19 WHEREAS, Mrs. Reeves lived every day of her life in the spirit
20 of the true Texas pioneer, blazing new trails for women and
21 demonstrating determination and passion in the pursuit and
22 attainment of her dreams; with her death, the Lone Star State has
23 lost a unique and inspiring citizen, and it is a privilege to join
24 with her family and friends in remembering the fascinating life of
25 this renowned and much-loved cowgirl; now, therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 78th Texas
27 Legislature, 2nd Called Session, hereby pay special tribute to the

H.R. No. 193

1 life of Connie Douglas Reeves of Kerrville and extend deepest
2 sympathy to her family, including her six nieces and six nephews,
3 and to her many friends, former students, and admirers around the
4 world; and, be it further

5 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
6 prepared for the members of her family and that when the Texas House
7 of Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Connie
8 Douglas Reeves.