

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Alberto Barrera was born over 70 years ago in Rio
2 Grande City, Texas, by the banks of the Rio Grande River and he was
3 the seventh child of 14 brothers and sisters raised by his parents,
4 Bonifacio Barrera and Antonia Rodriguez Barrera; and

5 WHEREAS, Alberto Barrera was educated in Catholic school in
6 Starr County as a young lad and later attended the Rio Grande City
7 Independent School District (ISD) North Grammar School, where a
8 series of dedicated teachers gave the young man a lifelong thirst
9 for knowledge and educational achievement; and

10 WHEREAS, Upon his graduation from high school in 1948 he
11 received a rare \$75 college scholarship from the Rio Grande City
12 Parent Teacher Organization, which he used to enroll in Edinburg
13 Junior College in Edinburg, Texas, an institution that went on to
14 become a four-year college and later the University of Texas--Pan
15 American; and

16 WHEREAS, While the \$75 covered a semester of tuition and
17 schoolbooks, Alberto Barrera worked his way through school as a
18 waiter at the college Faculty Club through the help of a lifelong
19 friend, Ruben Solis; Mr. Barrera earned \$16 a month for two years
20 and received room and board before transferring to a four-year
21 college; and

22 WHEREAS, Mr. Barrera enrolled at Texas A&I University in
23 Kingsville and lived with his brother, Eduardo, with whom he
24 studied and graduated with two years later; and

1 WHEREAS, After graduation at the age of 21, Alberto Barrera
2 was drafted by the United States Army and served in the Korean War,
3 including nine months of action in Korea and eight months in nearby
4 Japan, during which he also drew cartoons for the army newspaper and
5 worked as a mapmaker drawing classified maps for military
6 operations; and

7 WHEREAS, After his term of service he was honorably
8 discharged back to the civilian world and presented with numerous
9 awards for his service, including the Korean Service Medal, the
10 Service Bronze Star, the United Nations Service Medal, the National
11 Defense Service Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal; and

12 WHEREAS, Alberto Barrera returned home to pursue his
13 education in 1955; he studied abroad at the University of Mexico
14 City, married Celia Garcia on August 18, 1956, and went on to
15 receive his master of arts degree from Texas A&I University in
16 Kingsville in 1963; and

17 WHEREAS, Raising his four children, Armandina, Alberto,
18 Arnoldo, and Ambarina, he continued his lifelong pursuit of
19 education teaching at Rio Grande City Consolidated Independent
20 School District; during his 42-year career with the Rio Grande City
21 ISD, Alberto Barrera was a teacher in various grade levels and a
22 bilingual director, and he later taught classes at South Texas
23 Community College; and

24 WHEREAS, Alberto Barrera also had a lifelong love of music
25 that started when he wrote poetry and songs in high school inspired
26 by his family and cultural experiences he had while growing up in
27 South Texas; and

1 WHEREAS, It was the tradition of his family members to gather
2 on the front porch each evening and recount their day; many times
3 his father would share a proverb or story with the family and quite
4 frequently his mother would sing a song and elaborate on the meaning
5 and background of the song; and

6 WHEREAS, Alberto Barrera shared this rich cultural
7 background with his family and contributed to it by writing many
8 songs and poems which he shared with them and, at first, discarded
9 until a local Catholic priest urged him to save all his work; and

10 WHEREAS, Many years later on a warm South Texas evening when
11 Mr. Barrera and his wife and children were returning from a trip to
12 McAllen and listening to a Spanish song on the radio, he commented
13 that he could write much better lyrics than those playing on the
14 radio; and

15 WHEREAS, Mrs. Barrera commented that if her husband thought
16 he could do a better job, "Why don't you write and record a song
17 yourself?", setting her husband on a new path for many years to
18 come; and

19 WHEREAS, After that day, Alberto Barrera began a much more
20 systematic approach to his musical interests, making songs for
21 specific purposes; one song he wrote, "La Urraca," was written to
22 help his youngest daughter learn to pronounce the double rr's of the
23 Spanish language; shortly thereafter, his daughter Ambarina was
24 able to pronounce the sound with no trouble at all; and

25 WHEREAS, Since he created "La Urraca," many more songs and
26 poems followed along with stories that can be found today in state
27 adopted textbooks and which have been published alongside authors

1 of renown like Rudolfo A. Anaya; and

2 WHEREAS, His music has worked its way into the offerings of
3 many of the well-known bands playing "corridos," or songs that tell
4 stories of life along the Texas-Mexico border, and are also
5 composed for many special occasions, including retirements,
6 funerals, political campaigns, birthdays, and other events in the
7 lives of many South Texas families; now, therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, That the author of "Mi Lindo Rio Grande" and many
9 other stirring stories, poems, and vocals that have earned the
10 admiration of audiences across the state and the nation is
11 deserving of recognition for his many accomplishments in his public
12 and private life and the admiration of his fellow Texans; and, be it
13 further

14 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
15 prepared for Mr. Barrera as an expression of high regard by the
16 Texas House of Representatives.

Guillen

H.R. No. 217

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 217 was adopted by the House on
October 2, 2003, by a non-record vote.

Chief Clerk of the House