

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 7

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to pay tribute to the life of the first African American female aviator, Bessie Coleman, on the occasion of Bessie Coleman Day, which is being celebrated on July 30, 2005, in Arlington, Texas; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Coleman was born into a large family in Atlanta, Texas, on January 26, 1892; the family moved to Waxahachie when Bessie was two years old; in 1900, Bessie's father abandoned his family, and Bessie helped with the family finances by picking cotton and assisting her mother with washing and ironing jobs; and

WHEREAS, Bessie always had a drive to learn and to better her position in life, and she had a lifelong dream of learning to fly; she graduated from high school, but shortage of funds prevented her from continuing beyond the first semester at college; she was an avid reader, however, and began studying everything she could find on aviation; and

WHEREAS, She moved to Chicago to live with an older brother and worked as a manicurist and as manager of a chili parlor; she applied to flying schools but was repeatedly turned away due to prejudice; she was determined to learn to fly, and on the advice of a black editor and publisher of a Chicago newspaper, she used the money she had saved and moved to France, where there was less prejudice regarding blacks and women; and

WHEREAS, When Bessie was issued a pilot's license by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale on June 15, 1921, she became the first black female pilot in the world; she returned to the United States with the goal of opening a flying school for

African Americans; to earn the money to open her school, she began giving flying exhibitions and lecturing on aviation; on April 30, 1926, Bessie lost her life in a fatal accident while preparing for an exhibition in Jacksonville, Florida; and

WHEREAS, Bessie Coleman had a dream to fly, and the young black woman would not be stopped by prejudice or discrimination in achieving her goal; the courage she demonstrated throughout her life inspired other African Americans to carry on in the field of aviation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 79th Legislature, 2nd Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the life of Bessie Coleman and her contributions to aviation and role in the history of black Americans and extend best wishes to all who are celebrating Bessie Coleman Day; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for Bessie Coleman Day.

Averitt

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on July 26, 2005.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate