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H.R. No. 855

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, J. Frank Dobie, a writer and chronicler of the  
2 folklore of Texas and the Southwest, published some 25 books in his  
3 distinguished career, and it is indeed a pleasure to recognize his  
4 important role in Texas literature; and

5           WHEREAS, Born in 1888 on a ranch in South Texas, Mr. Dobie  
6 earned his bachelor's degree from Southwestern University in  
7 Georgetown, where he also met Bertha McKee, a fellow student who  
8 would become his wife and lifelong companion; after college, he  
9 taught at a high school in Alpine and worked as a newspaper reporter  
10 during the summers, but soon felt a longing to teach poetry at a  
11 more advanced level and enrolled in graduate school at Columbia  
12 University in New York; and

13           WHEREAS, After pursuing his master's degree at Columbia, Mr.  
14 Dobie returned to Texas and joined the English department at The  
15 University of Texas at Austin; his teaching career was temporarily  
16 interrupted by a stint in the U.S. Army at the end of World War I,  
17 but he returned to UT after his discharge; and

18           WHEREAS, Remembering the stories of his uncle's vaqueros that  
19 he had enjoyed as a boy, he settled on a scholarly pursuit that  
20 would satisfy his interests both as a writer and as a student of  
21 Texas history; he decided that he would collect and tell the  
22 legendary tales of the Lone Star State much as the famed  
23 musicologist and fellow Texan John Lomax had collected the folk  
24 songs of the South; from that point on, Mr. Dobie actively pursued

1 the folk legends of the Southwest in his travels, readings, and  
2 writings, and in 1921, he became editor of the Texas Folklore  
3 Society; and

4 WHEREAS, His book *Coronado's Children* received national  
5 attention and significantly broadened the writer's audience; while  
6 continuing to teach, he traveled, lectured, published articles and  
7 books, including *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver* and *The Longhorns*,  
8 and began a syndicated newspaper column called "My Texas"; in 1930,  
9 he introduced his course, *Life and Literature of the Southwest*, and  
10 it soon became the most popular offering on campus; he also enjoyed  
11 a two-year stint as a lecturer on American history in Cambridge,  
12 England; and

13 WHEREAS, An ardent individualist, Mr. Dobie often spoke out  
14 on social issues and other causes that captured his attention; he  
15 argued against censorship and demagoguery and championed black  
16 voting rights and organized labor's right to strike; his formal  
17 teaching days ended when he resigned from the university in 1947,  
18 but he continued to meet with students and colleagues in informal  
19 literary salons held in the backyard of his home, which was adjacent  
20 to campus; and

21 WHEREAS, After his death in 1964, his wife saw to the  
22 publication of two books under his name based on his notes; she and  
23 friends also established a most fitting memorial to him with the  
24 Dobie Paisano Fellowship, which provides money for writers and  
25 artists to work on their projects during a six-month stay on Mr.  
26 Dobie's Paisano Ranch in the Texas Hill Country; today, his Austin  
27 residence is home to the Michener Center for Writers, an

1 interdisciplinary creative writing graduate program at UT; and

2           WHEREAS, Although more than 40 years have passed since his  
3 death, J. Frank Dobie continues to enhance the lives of countless  
4 readers with the rich legacy of writings that he left behind, and we  
5 may consider ourselves fortunate that he chose to focus his  
6 extraordinary talent on the bountiful stories and traditions of our  
7 state; now, therefore, be it

8           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 79th Texas  
9 Legislature hereby pay special tribute to the life of J. Frank Dobie  
10 and acknowledge his remarkable contributions to Texas letters.