

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Legendary bull rider Willie Thomas of Booth was  
2 inducted into the Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame at a ceremony in  
3 Temple on February 14, 2004; and

4           WHEREAS, A pioneer for African American cowboys across the  
5 country, Mr. Thomas, who faced years of discrimination during the  
6 segregated 1950s with grace, humility, and strength, was one of six  
7 inductees into the hall of fame and was nominated for the National  
8 Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum's Rodeo Hall of Fame in Oklahoma  
9 City, Oklahoma, in 2004; and

10          WHEREAS, Born on January 30, 1930, in Richmond, Willie Thomas  
11 was raised on the A. P. George Ranch and eventually became a working  
12 cowboy who paid his dues running the cattle farm with his parents,  
13 Johnny and Josephine Thomas; in 1952, he participated in his first  
14 Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association competition in San Antonio,  
15 and from there, he embarked on a 30-year career during which he won  
16 more than 20 belt buckles, including the 1968 all-around title of  
17 the Southwestern National Cowboy Association, and 25 saddles, rode  
18 more than 4,000 bulls, and landed top rankings in the world; and

19          WHEREAS, This esteemed cowboy rode with renowned riders such  
20 as Harold Cash, Jim Shoulders, Freckles Brown, and Clyde Frost,  
21 father of Lane Frost, a world-famous bull rider whose life story is  
22 featured in a film titled *8 Seconds*, and he was president of the  
23 Southwestern National Cowboy Association; and

24          WHEREAS, His accomplishments are especially impressive

1 considering the great obstacles placed in his way throughout his  
2 career, including racist rodeo officials who prevented him from  
3 competing because of the color of his skin; on one occasion, Mr.  
4 Thomas pulled his hat over his eyes, concealed his face, and won a  
5 bull riding competition in Lake Charles, Louisiana, only to be  
6 stripped of his winnings and escorted from town when the judges  
7 discovered he was African American; and

8         WHEREAS, At the age of nine, Willie Thomas had an accident at  
9 the George Ranch that left him with a prosthetic eye; he has also  
10 broken his leg nine times and been told twice he would never walk  
11 again; despite these setbacks, Mr. Thomas persevered and pursued  
12 his dream to become one of the best bull riders in the history of the  
13 sport; and

14         WHEREAS, With a large and loving family that includes his  
15 wife, Ora Lee, their nine children, Sandra Pipkin, Dwight Thomas,  
16 Glen Thomas, Vicki Meriwether, Berkley Thomas, Willie Thomas, Jr.,  
17 Myron Thomas, Rodney Thomas, and Sharee Thomas, and 25  
18 grandchildren, Mr. Thomas worked for the Texas Department of  
19 Transportation for many years before retiring in August of 1991;  
20 today, he hosts popular trail rides on his farm, promoting a  
21 community spirit in Fort Bend County; in addition to being inducted  
22 into the Texas hall of fame, he was recognized by the George Ranch,  
23 which hosted a reception in his honor; and

24         WHEREAS, Truly a trailblazer as well as a man of exceptional  
25 abilities, Willie Thomas opened doors for generations of African  
26 Americans by integrating rodeos in Texas and beyond; it is truly a  
27 pleasure to pay tribute to his impressive accomplishments, notable

1 rodeo career, and unwavering strength of spirit; now, therefore, be  
2 it

3           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 79th Texas  
4 Legislature hereby congratulate Willie Thomas of Booth on his  
5 induction into the Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame and extend to him  
6 sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

7           RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
8 prepared for Mr. Thomas as an expression of high regard by the Texas  
9 House of Representatives.

Olivo

Craddick	Geren	Menendez
Allen of Harris	Giddings	Merritt
Allen of Dallas	Gonzales	Miller
Alonzo	Gonzalez Toureilles	Moreno of Harris
Anchia	Goodman	Moreno of El Paso
Anderson	Goolsby	Morrison
Bailey	Griggs	Mowery
Baxter	Grusendorf	Naishtat
Berman	Guillen	Nixon
Blake	Haggerty	Noriega
Bohac	Hamilton	Oliveira
Bonnen	Hamric	Olivo
Branch	Hardcastle	Orr
Brown of Kaufman	Harper-Brown	Otto
Brown of Brazos	Hartnett	Paxton
Burnam	Hegar	Pena
Callegari	Herrero	Phillips
Campbell	Hilderbran	Pickett
Casteel	Hill	Pitts
Castro	Hochberg	Puente
Chavez	Hodge	Quintanilla
Chisum	Homer	Raymond
Coleman	Hope	Reyna
Cook of Navarro	Hopson	Riddle
Cook of Colorado	Howard	Ritter
Corte	Hughes	Rodriguez
Crabb	Hunter	Rose
Crownover	Hupp	Seaman
Davis of Harris	Isett	Smith of Tarrant
Davis of Dallas	Jackson	Smith of Harris
Dawson	Jones of Lubbock	Smithee
Delisi	Jones of Dallas	Solis
Denny	Keel	Solomons
Deshotel	Keffer of Dallas	Strama
Driver	Keffer of Eastland	Straus
Dukes	King of Parker	Swinford
Dunnam	King of Zavala	Talton
Dutton	Kolkhorst	Taylor
Edwards	Krusee	Thompson
Eiland	Kuempel	Truitt
Eissler	Laney	Turner
Elkins	Laubenberg	Uresti
Escobar	Leibowitz	Van Arsdale
Farabee	Luna	Veasey
Farrar	Madden	Villarreal
Flores	Martinez	Vo
Flynn	Martinez Fischer	West
Frost	McCall	Wong
Gallego	McClendon	Woolley
Gattis	McReynolds	Zedler

H.R. No. 1455

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 1455 was adopted by the House on May 19, 2005, by a non-record vote.

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Chief Clerk of the House