

By: Chisum

H.R. No. 39

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The State of Texas has lost an esteemed statesman
2 with the death of former speaker of the Texas House of
3 Representatives, the Honorable Bill W. Clayton of Springlake, who
4 passed away on January 6, 2007, at the age of 78; and

5 WHEREAS, Born on September 11, 1928, Bill Clayton grew up as a
6 member of a farming family near the Texas Panhandle town of
7 Springlake; after earning a degree in agricultural economics at
8 Texas A&M University in 1950, he assumed the management of the
9 family farm and also took part in other business enterprises in the
10 Springlake area; and

11 WHEREAS, His interest in civic affairs led him into politics,
12 and after serving as a delegate for Lyndon Johnson at the Democratic
13 National Convention in 1960, he was elected to the Texas House of
14 Representatives in 1962; for the next two decades, this insightful
15 leader was repeatedly returned to office, and he became an
16 influential figure at the State Capitol; Representative Clayton was
17 particularly concerned with water issues and sponsored legislation
18 that called for increased resources and conservation in the Lone
19 Star State; and

20 WHEREAS, With a reputation for building consensus among other
21 legislators, Bill Clayton was recognized as a candidate to lead the
22 chamber, and in 1975 he was elected as the 70th speaker of the house
23 of representatives; he retained that position until he retired from
24 the legislature at the end of 1982, and his eight-year tenure was

1 twice as long as any previous Texas speaker; and

2 WHEREAS, Pioneering new initiatives to make state government
3 more efficient and accountable, Speaker Clayton oversaw the
4 enhancement of support services, electronic resources, and office
5 facilities for legislators, and he expanded the activities of
6 standing house committees and directed them to conduct research in
7 the interim periods between legislative sessions; as vice-chairman
8 of the Joint Advisory Committee on Governmental Operations, he
9 helped implement a regular oversight process for state agencies
10 through the Texas Sunset Act, and he was a driving force behind the
11 creation of a new commission on ethics; and

12 WHEREAS, Speaker Clayton was renowned for his abilities to
13 reach out to members of both parties and became the first Democratic
14 speaker to appoint Republicans as committee chairs; his rapport
15 with officials across the political spectrum continued after he
16 left office, when he became the founder and president of Capital
17 Consultants, a political and business consulting firm in Austin;
18 Mr. Clayton, who switched to the Republican Party in 1985, also
19 served two terms on the State Aircraft Pooling Board, was a regent
20 for The Texas A&M University System, and was a member of the board
21 for Campaigns for People, a group that promotes campaign finance
22 reform in Texas; he also found time to further his education,
23 earning an MBA from The University of Texas at Austin in 1992; and

24 WHEREAS, The straightforward qualities of rural living
25 continued to be part of Bill Clayton's life, as he maintained his
26 agricultural operations in Springlake and mentored his son, Tommy,
27 in the management of the business; like many other residents of the

1 farming community he called home, he was known for his calmness and
2 common sense, and in bringing these qualities to the highest levels
3 of state government, Bill W. Clayton established an admirable
4 record of service that strongly influenced younger public servants
5 and has had a lasting impact on the State of Texas; now, therefore,
6 be it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas
8 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Bill Clayton and
9 extend deepest condolences to the members of his family: to his
10 wife, Delma Clayton; to his children, Tommy Clayton and Brenda
11 Herrell; to his sister, Ann Kelley; to his brother, Donnie Clayton;
12 to his five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren; and to his
13 other relatives and many friends; and, be it further

14 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
15 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
16 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Bill
17 Clayton.