

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Wharton County Historical Museum is unveiling  
2 The Melba Cook Birkner Doll Collection in 2007, and this event  
3 provides a fitting opportunity to recognize Mrs. Birkner and her  
4 husband, Otha Wyatt "Skeet" Birkner, who made the donation; and

5           WHEREAS, A lifelong resident of the Lone Star State, Mr.  
6 Birkner was born in Manchaca in 1924; he served his fellow residents  
7 with distinction as a member of the Texas House of Representatives  
8 from 1963 until 1967, when he retired to become county  
9 commissioner, a position he held for two decades; and

10           WHEREAS, During his tenure with the legislature, the  
11 Honorable Otha Birkner served on a number of committees, including  
12 the Parks and Wildlife, Highways and Roads, Aeronautics, and Mental  
13 Health/Mental Retardation Committees; moreover, he was involved in  
14 the acquisition of land for a number of state parks and the creation  
15 of Lake Texana State Park as a reservoir and recreational area and  
16 in establishing agricultural exemptions and garnering funds for the  
17 Head Start Program and other special needs initiatives; and

18           WHEREAS, Mr. Birkner also played an integral role in  
19 authorizing funding for the 1968 World's Fair and the creation of  
20 the HemisFair '68 park in San Antonio; his efforts in behalf of the  
21 Alamo City led St. Mary's University to award him an honorary  
22 doctoral degree; and

23           WHEREAS, Mr. Birkner has served on the local school board,  
24 worked as a bank director, and been appointed to the

1 Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments by four Texas  
2 governors; and

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Birkner shared nearly six decades with his  
4 beloved wife, Melba Rose Cook Birkner, and the couple was blessed  
5 with three sons, Wyatt, Donald, and Tim; and

6 WHEREAS, Born in Mabank, Mrs. Birkner was also a dedicated  
7 community leader; the consummate spouse of a public official, she  
8 supported her husband in his many professional and civic endeavors  
9 while maintaining lively written correspondence with a number of  
10 prominent political figures, including Jacqueline Kennedy, Lady  
11 Bird Johnson, Nellie Connally, and Barbara Jordan; and

12 WHEREAS, Mrs. Birkner also had a career as an administrative  
13 assistant to the principals of Van Vleck elementary and middle  
14 schools; her commitment to the students of each institution was  
15 nothing short of exemplary; a respected mentor and friend to many  
16 young Texans, she was known for her kindness and encouragement and  
17 often made phone calls and home visits to students in need; and

18 WHEREAS, Mrs. Birkner was a talented designer of dolls and  
19 doll fashions, and she amassed a significant collection during the  
20 seven decades she enjoyed this hobby; and

21 WHEREAS, Though Melba Birkner's passing on March 20, 2006,  
22 left a void in the lives of those who knew her, the gift of this  
23 collection to the Wharton County Historical Museum will serve as a  
24 lasting reminder of her talent and dedication, while its donation  
25 to the museum serves as a tribute to the generosity of her loving  
26 husband; now, therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas

H.R. No. 427

1 Legislature hereby pay special tribute to the life of Melba Rose  
2 Cook Birkner and commend the Honorable Otha Wyatt "Skeet" Birkner  
3 for his donation to the Wharton County Historical Museum and honor  
4 him for the enduring gift he has shared with his fellow citizens;  
5 and, be it further

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

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H.R. No. 427

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 427 was unanimously adopted by a rising vote of the House on March 1, 2007.

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Chief Clerk of the House