

By: Zerwas

H.R. No. 427

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

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.