

By: McCall

H.R. No. 2587

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Texans throughout the Lone Star State and beyond  
2 were deeply saddened by the loss of a beloved former First Lady of  
3 Texas, Idanell "Nellie" Brill Connally, who died in Austin on  
4 September 1, 2006, at the age of 87; and

5           WHEREAS, Born in the Capitol City on February 24, 1919, to  
6 Arno and Katie Brill, Nellie Brill was a vivacious and lovely young  
7 woman who aspired to be an actress and even auditioned for a role in  
8 *Gone With the Wind*; and

9           WHEREAS, In 1937, on the campus of The University of Texas at  
10 Austin, she met future Texas Governor John Connally, and the couple  
11 fell in love at first sight; she was named Sweetheart of the  
12 University in 1938, the same year Mr. Connally was elected student  
13 body president, and the pair were married in 1940; and

14           WHEREAS, During World War II she shared an apartment with her  
15 lifelong friend Lady Bird Johnson in Washington, D.C., while Mr.  
16 Connally and his political mentor, Lyndon Baines Johnson, were  
17 serving their country; after the war she devoted herself to raising  
18 her children and supporting her husband's political career in  
19 Texas, doing everything from answering phones to fund-raising; and

20           WHEREAS, She accompanied her husband to Washington, D.C.,  
21 again when he was appointed secretary of the navy by President John  
22 Kennedy in 1961, but they returned to the Lone Star State the  
23 following year when Mr. Connally ran for governor, and he was  
24 subsequently elected to the first of three terms; and

1           WHEREAS, On that tragic day in Dallas in November 1963,  
2 Mrs. Connally was present for a defining event in our nation's  
3 history when President Kennedy was assassinated and Governor  
4 Connally was gravely wounded; her presence of mind and quick action  
5 are credited with helping to save her husband's life; and

6           WHEREAS, Mrs. Connally was the First Lady of Texas from 1963  
7 through 1968, and during that period she was instrumental in  
8 planning and creating the beautiful gardens still present today at  
9 the governor's mansion, and she received the inaugural Ruth Lester  
10 Award for her efforts; she also played a part in the planning of the  
11 Texas Travel Trails for the Texas Tourist Development Agency; and

12           WHEREAS, She and her husband returned one more time to the  
13 nation's capital when he was appointed secretary of the treasury by  
14 President Richard Nixon, but after Secretary Connally completed his  
15 government service, the couple made their home in Houston; and

16           WHEREAS, Following the death of her husband of 53 years,  
17 Mrs. Connally remained active in many community and charity  
18 organizations, including the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, the  
19 Children's Miracle Network Telethon for Hermann Children's  
20 Hospital, and the Texas Preservation Trust Fund; as an indomitable  
21 survivor of breast cancer, she created the Nellie B. Connally  
22 Breast Cancer Research Fund, and the breast cancer clinic at M. D.  
23 Anderson Cancer Center now bears her name; and

24           WHEREAS, In 2005, Mrs. Connally returned to Austin to live,  
25 saying "This is where I discovered America, and this is where I want  
26 to leave it"; called "the epitome of graciousness" by Governor Rick  
27 Perry, Nellie Connally was the very definition of Texas style,

1 charm, and steel; devoted to her children, grandchildren, and  
2 great-grandchildren, she lived her life to the fullest until the  
3 very end, maintaining nearly as lively a social life as she had some  
4 70 years before, when she was the Sweetheart of the University; now,  
5 therefore, be it

6         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas  
7 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the extraordinary life of Nellie  
8 Connally and extend sincere condolences to her family: to her sons,  
9 John B. Connally III and his wife, Diane, and Mark Madison Connally  
10 and his wife, Anne; to her daughter, Sharon Connally Ammann and her  
11 husband, Robert; to her sister, Sheba Stevens; to her brother, Bob  
12 Brill and his wife, Adele; to her eight grandchildren and eight  
13 great-grandchildren; and to her other family and friends; and, be  
14 it further

15         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
16 prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of  
17 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Nellie  
18 Connally.