

By: McCall

H.C.R. No. 253

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Lady Bird Johnson, one of the nation's most beloved
2 first ladies, passed away on July 11, 2007, at the age of 94; and

3 WHEREAS, Born on December 22, 1912, in Karnack, the former
4 Claudia Alta Taylor was the third child of Thomas Jefferson Taylor
5 and Minnie Pattillo Taylor, and she was dubbed "Lady Bird" by her
6 nursemaid as a toddler; when she was five, her mother died and her
7 Aunt Effie subsequently stepped in to help raise her; and

8 WHEREAS, She graduated in 1928 from Marshall High School and
9 attended Saint Mary's Episcopal School for Girls in Dallas before
10 enrolling at The University of Texas at Austin, where she earned a
11 bachelor's degree in history in 1933 and a bachelor's of journalism
12 with honors in 1934; her plans to become a newspaper reporter were
13 diverted after she met Lyndon Baines Johnson, who was visiting
14 Austin on business in his role as a congressional secretary;
15 remarking later that she felt like a moth drawn to a flame, she
16 married him on November 17, 1934, within 10 weeks of their first
17 date; and

18 WHEREAS, By 1937, Mrs. Johnson was on the campaign trail in
19 support of her husband's bid for a Congressional seat, and not five
20 years later she was running his office while he served in the U.S.
21 Navy during World War II; at the same time, she demonstrated her
22 business acumen by purchasing a faltering Austin radio station with
23 an inheritance from her mother; she revived the station with her
24 tireless oversight and eventually expanded it into a multi-million

1 dollar broadcasting company that included a television station, a
2 cable television system, and several radio stations; and

3 WHEREAS, Mrs. Johnson delivered stump speeches throughout
4 Texas in behalf of her husband's race for the U.S. Senate, and she
5 traveled more than 35,000 miles for the Kennedy/Johnson ticket,
6 including trips she organized with Ethel and Eunice Kennedy to
7 introduce Texans to the presidential candidate's family; following
8 the fateful turn of events that thrust her husband into the
9 presidency in November 1963, she stood by his side as he pushed a
10 bold and controversial agenda, and she later defended his policies
11 during a whistle-stop tour through the South, where she spoke with
12 characteristic calm to large and unruly crowds; breaking new ground
13 for a first lady when she campaigned on her own, there is no doubt
14 that she contributed to President Johnson's 1964 landslide victory,
15 which included six of the eight southern states that many expected
16 him to lose; and

17 WHEREAS, It was during Mrs. Johnson's second term as first
18 lady that she initiated a beautification project of the nation's
19 capital; raising public and private dollars and enlisting a team of
20 philanthropists and government officials, she guided the planting
21 of flowers and trees on the mall and in triangle parks all over the
22 city, and she pressed for several revitalization efforts; the local
23 actions were a prelude to what became the first major legislative
24 campaign ever commenced by a first lady; the Highway Beautification
25 Act of 1965 or, as it came to be known, "Lady Bird's Bill," called
26 for fewer billboards and junkyards along the highways and
27 dramatically improved the American landscape; and

1 WHEREAS, After returning to Texas in 1969, Mrs. Johnson
2 focused on enhancing her native state; she was the leading force
3 behind the development of a hike and bike trail in downtown Austin
4 that has become one of the city's most treasured public spaces, and
5 for 20 years she continued to encourage the beautification of the
6 state's roadways by recognizing highway districts for their use of
7 native plants and scenery; in 1982, on the occasion of her 70th
8 birthday, she founded the National Wildflower Research Center,
9 which was later renamed the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and
10 associated with The University of Texas at Austin; and

11 WHEREAS, Along the way, Mrs. Johnson published *A White House*
12 *Diary*, an edited version of the diary she kept as first lady, played
13 a key role in planning for the LBJ Library and Museum and the LBJ
14 School of Public Affairs, served as a member of The University of
15 Texas System Board of Regents, and remained actively involved in
16 the LBJ Holding Company; although she lost President Johnson in
17 early 1973, the energy and passion with which she accomplished so
18 much recalled the momentum of the man who had swept her off her feet
19 decades earlier; her life was further enriched by her two
20 daughters, Lynda Bird and Luci Baines, who were born while their
21 father was a congressman, and by her numerous grandchildren and
22 great-grandchildren; and

23 WHEREAS, Wholly committed to improving the world around her,
24 Lady Bird Johnson set an inspiring example of leadership and
25 vision, and her gentle kindness touched more lives than she could
26 ever know; of her enduring achievements, the miles and miles of
27 colorful wildflowers that brighten our cities and countryside

1 perhaps best evoke the memory of this exceptional woman; now,
2 therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
4 hereby pay tribute to the remarkable life of Lady Bird Johnson; and,
5 be it further

6 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
7 prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of
8 Representatives and Senate adjourn this day, they do so in memory of
9 Lady Bird Johnson.