

By: Zerwas

H.R. No. 966

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Devotees of fine dramatic writing across Texas and  
2 around the nation and the world are mourning the loss of playwright  
3 and screenwriter Horton Foote, who died on March 4, 2009, at the age  
4 of 92; and

5 WHEREAS, Albert Horton Foote, Jr., was born in Wharton on  
6 March 14, 1916, to Albert Horton Foote and the former Hallie Brooks;  
7 at the age of 16, Mr. Foote moved to Dallas to study acting; he later  
8 studied for two years at the Pasadena Playhouse in California, then  
9 moved to New York, where he joined the American Actors Company; and

10 WHEREAS, After Mr. Foote performed an improvisation based on  
11 his boyhood, someone suggested that he write about life in the small  
12 town where he grew up; that evening, Mr. Foote began a one-act play,  
13 *Wharton Dance*, about the Friday night dances of his youth; a few  
14 years later, his first full-length play, *Texas Town*, was performed  
15 in New York to good reviews; for the rest of his life, Mr. Foote  
16 continued to write plays set in the fictional Texas town of  
17 Harrison, based on Wharton; and

18 WHEREAS, To support himself at the beginning of his career,  
19 Mr. Foote worked as a night elevator operator and a clerk in a  
20 bookstore, where he met his future wife, Lillian Vallish; they were  
21 married in 1945 and remained together until her death in 1992; as a  
22 young couple, they moved to Washington, D.C., where he helped run  
23 the King-Smith School of the Creative Arts and was the first to open  
24 the school's theater to all races; and

1           WHEREAS, Returning to New York in 1950, Mr. Foote continued  
2 to write plays while making his living writing for television; his  
3 play *The Trip to Bountiful* was first produced for television, then  
4 played on Broadway, and was later made into a film; his television  
5 work included adaptations of stories by William Faulkner; and

6           WHEREAS, Mr. Foote began writing for the movies in the 1950s,  
7 and he won his first Academy Award for the screenplay he adapted  
8 from the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* in 1962; he won his second  
9 Academy Award for his script for the 1983 film *Tender Mercies*, which  
10 he wrote for his friend, actor Robert Duvall; and

11           WHEREAS, Returning to stage writing in the late 1960s, Mr.  
12 Foote began *The Orphans' Home*, a nine-play cycle based on his  
13 family's history and spanning the first quarter of the 20th  
14 century; with his wife as producer, two of the plays from the cycle,  
15 *1918* and *On Valentine's Day*, were made into films that were shot in  
16 Waxahachie and starred Mr. Foote's daughter, Hallie; and

17           WHEREAS, Mr. Foote created critically acclaimed work until  
18 the end of his life; in 1994 and 1995, the Signature Theater in New  
19 York devoted an entire season to his plays, and one of them, *The*  
20 *Young Man from Atlanta*, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1995; his 2002  
21 play, *The Carpetbagger's Children*, played to sold-out audiences,  
22 and his recently rewritten play, *Dividing the Estate*, won glowing  
23 reviews in the fall of 2008; and

24           WHEREAS, Along with his Academy Awards and Pulitzer Prize,  
25 Mr. Foote received the National Medal of Arts from President Bill  
26 Clinton; his contributions to Texas letters and film were  
27 recognized with the Bookend Award from the Texas Book Festival, a

1 Texas Medal of Arts, and induction into the Texas Film Hall of Fame;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, A courtly and good-humored man, Horton Foote wrote  
4 with great tenderness and insight about the struggles and small  
5 triumphs of ordinary Texans, but so evocatively that audiences  
6 around the world saw their own dreams and disappointments reflected  
7 on the stage or the screen; the young man who departed Wharton in  
8 1932 spent the rest of his life celebrating the resilience and  
9 dignity he learned there, and wherever his success may have taken  
10 him, in his heart and in his work, he never left Texas; now,  
11 therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas  
13 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Horton Foote and  
14 extend sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his  
15 children, Hallie, Daisy, Horton, and Walter Foote; to his two  
16 grandchildren; and to his other relatives and friends; and, be it  
17 further

18 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
19 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
20 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Horton  
21 Foote.