

By: Shelton

H.R. No. 1288

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Family, friends, and former colleagues are mourning
2 the loss of aviation engineer Harry James Hillaker of Fort Worth,
3 who died on February 8, 2009, at the age of 89; and

4 WHEREAS, Harry Hillaker was born in Flint, Michigan, on May
5 9, 1919; after graduating from Flint Northern High School, he
6 studied aeronautical engineering at the University of Michigan; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1941 Mr. Hillaker went to work for Consolidated
8 Aircraft, which later became General Dynamics, in San Diego; in
9 1942 he transferred to the company's Fort Worth division, where he
10 worked on many of its major aviation projects, including the B-36
11 and B-58 bombers; in 1962, Mr. Hillaker began to work informally
12 with Major John Boyd, a fighter pilot, and a group known as the
13 "Fighter Mafia" to design and promote a lighter, more affordable,
14 and more maneuverable fighter plane; and

15 WHEREAS, The eventual result of their efforts was the F-16
16 fighter, and Mr. Hillaker led the General Dynamics design team that
17 produced this innovative and successful aircraft; the Fort Worth
18 plant where Mr. Hillaker worked, now part of Lockheed Martin, still
19 produces F-16s, and over the past 30 years, more than 4,400 have
20 been manufactured and the plane has become an essential part of the
21 air forces of some 25 countries; and

22 WHEREAS, Mr. Hillaker went on to serve as the chief project
23 engineer for the advanced versions of the F-16, and in 1980, he
24 became vice president and deputy program director for the F-16 XL;

1 he served two terms as chair of the aerospace vehicles panel of the
2 U.S. Air Force Scientific Advisory Board; he retired in 1985, and in
3 1990, he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering; and

4 WHEREAS, Affectionately known as "Daddy-O" to his family,
5 Mr. Hillaker was beloved for his warmth, his generosity, and his
6 sparkling sense of humor, and his role in the invention of the F-16
7 has earned him a permanent place in the history of aviation; now,
8 therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
10 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Harry James Hillaker
11 and extend sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his
12 wife of 65 years, Betty Hillaker; to his sons, Eric Hillaker and his
13 wife, Susan, and Harry Hillaker, Jr., and his wife, Michele; to his
14 daughters, Victoria Harrell and her husband, Howard, Deborah
15 Currier and her husband, Phil, and Missy Gillespie and her husband,
16 Jack; to his son-in-law, Dillon McDaniel; to his brother, John
17 Hillaker; to his 27 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren; and
18 to his other relatives and friends; and, be it further

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