

By: Branch

H.C.R. No. 28

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, The life of a Texas football icon and American  
2 sportscasting legend drew to a close with the passing of Don  
3 Meredith on December 5, 2010, at the age of 72; and

4           WHEREAS, Joseph Donald Meredith was born in Mount Vernon on  
5 April 10, 1938, to Jeff and Hazel Meredith; while a student at Mount  
6 Vernon High School, he was an all-state football and basketball  
7 player and president of his senior class; he went on to attend  
8 Southern Methodist University and was the Mustangs' starting  
9 quarterback from 1957 to 1959, gaining a national reputation for  
10 his outstanding performances; one highlight was the 1958 Battle for  
11 the Iron Skillet, in which he threw two touchdown passes and ran for  
12 another to lead SMU to a 20-13 victory over archrival Texas  
13 Christian University; in recognition of his accomplishments, he was  
14 named an All-American by the Football Writers Association of  
15 America in both 1958 and 1959; and

16           WHEREAS, This skilled competitor was the first player signed  
17 to the newly created Dallas Cowboys expansion team that joined the  
18 National Football League in 1960; he would spend his entire  
19 nine-year NFL career with the Cowboys and had the rare distinction  
20 of having never played a home game outside of North Texas as a high  
21 school, college, and professional athlete; he took over as the  
22 team's starting quarterback in 1963 and helped lead Dallas to its  
23 early successes, including appearances in the NFL title game in  
24 both 1966 and 1967; he was named the Bert Bell NFL Player of the Year

1 for 1966 and made the Pro Bowl three times; and

2 WHEREAS, Retiring as a player at the end of the 1968 season,  
3 Mr. Meredith soon entered broadcasting as a member of the initial  
4 *Monday Night Football* announcing crew, debuting in 1970; his sense  
5 of humor, knowledge of the game, and relaxed attitude made him the  
6 perfect counterpoint for his co-hosts, the overly articulate Howard  
7 Cosell and the all-business former New York Giant Frank Gifford;  
8 the adversarial chemistry he developed with Mr. Cosell was  
9 especially popular, and *Monday Night Football* quickly became one of  
10 the highest rated shows on television, making "Dandy Don" Meredith  
11 into a celebrity who transcended sports; and

12 WHEREAS, He left the show in 1974 to join NBC, and during the  
13 next few years he branched out into acting and hosting talk shows in  
14 addition to covering football; he returned to the *Monday Night*  
15 *Football* booth in 1977, staying until his retirement in 1985;  
16 through the years, he put his stamp on each game by serenading  
17 viewers with Willie Nelson's lyrics "turn out the lights, the  
18 party's over" whenever the outcome of a contest was no longer in  
19 doubt; and

20 WHEREAS, There were many honors along the way for this  
21 charming and affable Texan; SMU gave him the university's  
22 Distinguished Alumni Award in 1983 and retired his No. 17 jersey in  
23 2008; he was elected to the Texas Sports Hall of Fame and the  
24 College Football Hall of Fame, and the Cowboys added him to their  
25 prestigious Ring of Honor; his broadcast career also earned him  
26 accolades, including an Emmy Award for broadcasting excellence in  
27 1971 and the Pete Rozelle Radio-Television Award from the Pro

1 Football Hall of Fame in 2007; and

2 WHEREAS, Although his death has brought great sorrow to his  
3 loved ones and his numerous fans, Don Meredith leaves behind a  
4 legacy of excellence and good humor that will be treasured long into  
5 the future; now, therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas  
7 hereby pay tribute to the life of Joseph Donald Meredith and extend  
8 sincere sympathy to the members of his family: to his wife, Susan;  
9 to his children, Mary Donna, Michael, and Heather; to his brother,  
10 Jack; and to his other relatives and many friends; and, be it  
11 further

12 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
13 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
14 Representatives and Senate adjourn this day, they do so in memory of  
15 Don Meredith.