CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1      WHEREAS, Shirley Bird Perry, whose association with The

2  University of Texas at Austin spanned six decades and who made an

3  incalculable contribution both to the university and to the UT

4  System, passed away on May 4, 2011, at the age of 74; and

5      WHEREAS, A fifth-generation Texan, Mrs. Perry was born to

6  Homer and Laura Stevenson Bird near Stockdale in 1936; she arrived

7  at UT as a freshman in 1954, and though the campus was vastly larger

8  than the small-town high school she had attended, she thrived on the

9  Forty Acres; while an undergraduate, she served on the Texas Union

10 Board of Directors and was tapped for membership in the Orange

11 Jackets and Mortar Board; her senior year, she was named Most

12 Outstanding Woman Student by the Dads' Association; and

13     WHEREAS, After graduating with a degree in education in 1958,

14 Mrs. Perry worked as program director for the Texas Union before

15 moving to California, where she found a teaching position; a year in

16 the classroom with seventh-graders quickly persuaded her that her

17 future lay elsewhere, and she returned as program director of the

18 Texas Union in 1960; over the next decade, she focused on providing

19 a diverse array of programs for UT students and organized

20 appearances by such figures as Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert

21 Kennedy, and Marianne Moore, while also earning a master's degree

22 in educational psychology from UT in 1967; she became director of

23 the union in 1972; and

24     WHEREAS, During her time there, Mrs. Perry played an active

role in the Association of College Unions--International, becoming the first woman to be elected to the group's executive committee and the first woman to serve as ACUI president; in 1976 she left the university for a brief period to serve as coordinator for ACUI educational programs and services; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Bird Perry returned to The University of Texas in 1979, when Dr. Peter Flawn named her assistant to the president and coordinator of the university's centennial observance; her new responsibilities included overseeing the activities of the Centennial Commission, a series of commemorative events, and a capital campaign that substantially augmented faculty endowments and the funds for lectureships and scholarships; in 1981 she was promoted to vice president, and in 1983, the culminating year of the centennial celebration, she became vice president for development and community relations; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Perry continued to serve in that capacity under Dr. William Cunningham, who followed Dr. Flawn as university president in 1985; when Dr. Cunningham stepped down in 1992 to become chancellor of the UT System, he was loathe to lose such a priceless asset and persuaded Mrs. Perry to accompany him, naming her vice chancellor for development and external relations; her duties with the UT System included directing fund-raising operations, public affairs programs, the management of estates and trusts, and event planning, among other activities; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, Mrs. Perry resigned her office as vice chancellor to rejoin the administration at the university, accepting a position as senior vice president; in addition to

1  overseeing the fund-raising efforts of the UT president and
2  coordinating his visits to communities around the state, she worked
3  with the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History to more fully
4  document the history of the university she loved so well; and

5      WHEREAS, Honored repeatedly throughout her career, Shirley
6  Bird Perry received a Top Hand Award and a Distinguished Alumnus
7  Award from the Texas Exes in 1984 and 2005, respectively, an Award
8  of Distinction from the UT Parents' Association in 1992, and a
9  Presidential Citation, the highest recognition conferred by The
10 University of Texas, for 2010; in addition, the Texas Union has
11 created the Shirley Bird Perry Leadership Award to salute
12 outstanding students, and the UT presidents with whom she served
13 have established the Shirley Bird Perry Endowment Fund for
14 University History; Mrs. Perry also received accolades for her work
15 from the Association of College Unions--International, the Council
16 for the Advancement and Support of Education, and the National
17 Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges; and

18      WHEREAS, Shirley Bird was married to Sam R. Perry, an equally
19 fervent UT alum and an Austin attorney, in 1963, and they shared a
20 devoted union until her passing; and

21      WHEREAS, To her consummate skills as an administrator, Mrs.
22 Perry added unfailing kindness, unerring instincts, inexhaustible
23 energy, and a matchless knowledge of the university, its history,
24 and its inner workings; over the years, her endeavors helped to
25 build the foundation on which the reputation of the university
26 rests, and her wise counsel informed myriad decisions by university
27 and system leaders; she was, in the words of one, "the caretaker for

1 UT's soul," and she will be deeply and sorely missed; now,
2 therefore, be it

3      RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas
4 hereby pay tribute to the life of Shirley Bird Perry and extend
5 sincere sympathy to the members of her family: to her husband, Sam
6 R. Perry; to her sisters and brother-in-law, Mary Jane and Errol
7 Jonsson, Virginia Bird Davis, and Patsy Bird Weber; to her nephew,
8 Charles Cotter; to her great-nephews, Jake and Trevor Cotter; to
9 her cousin, Betty Bird; to her sisters-in-law, Polly Perry-Vincent
10 and her sons, Blair and Scott Franklin, and their families, and
11 Jenny Kay Kubiak and her husband, L. B. Kubiak, and their children,
12 Lindsay and Logan; and to her other relatives and many friends; and,
13 be it further

14      RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
15 prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of
16 Representatives and Senate adjourn this day, they do so in memory of
17 Shirley Bird Perry.