

By: Hilderbran

H.R. No. 63

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The birthday of Rod Kennedy provides a welcome  
2 opportunity to sing the praises of this extraordinary man; and

3           WHEREAS, While still a teenager, Mr. Kennedy entered the  
4 entertainment industry as a vocalist with the Bill Creighton  
5 Orchestra in Buffalo, New York; a live radio variety show in Albany  
6 soon hired him as a singer and cohost, and he gained further  
7 experience as the host of a jazz program in Boston before joining  
8 the U.S. Marines and deploying to Korea; and

9           WHEREAS, Mr. Kennedy later enrolled at The University of  
10 Texas at Austin and assisted in establishing its radio station,  
11 KUT; he served as the original manager of KAZZ-FM and became the  
12 owner of Austin station KHFI-FM, which helped numerous Austin folk  
13 artists reach a wider audience over the airwaves and at its summer  
14 concerts in Zilker Park; and

15           WHEREAS, Mr. Kennedy demonstrated a deep commitment to his  
16 community and to the arts, serving as a director of the Austin  
17 Symphony Orchestra, the Austin Ballet Society, the Austin Civic  
18 Theater, and the Austin Aqua Festival; moreover, he coproduced the  
19 Longhorn Jazz Festival, which brought such giants as Miles Davis,  
20 Thelonious Monk, and Dizzy Gillespie to the Lone Star State;  
21 playing an increasingly important role in developing the Austin  
22 singer-songwriter scene, he opened the Chequered Flag nightclub, a  
23 notable showcase for emerging artists, among them future icons  
24 Townes Van Zandt and Jerry Jeff Walker; and

1           WHEREAS, In 1972, Mr. Kennedy founded the Kerrville Folk  
2 Festival; it grew to become one of the nation's most popular live  
3 music events and helped launch the careers of Lyle Lovett, Robert  
4 Earl Keen, the Dixie Chicks, Lucinda Williams, and a host of other  
5 singer-songwriters; Mr. Kennedy also created the Kerrville Music  
6 Foundation to support educational services and sponsor a  
7 competition for beginning songwriters; while guiding the festival  
8 for some three decades, he produced more than 30 albums documenting  
9 performances there, as well as the Kerrville Wine & Music Festival  
10 and a variety of concerts across the United States and in Mexico;  
11 and

12           WHEREAS, Mr. Kennedy retired from the folk festival in 2002  
13 but continued to serve as a consultant to its organizers and to  
14 promoters around the country; in addition, he produced the "Music  
15 from Kerrville" concert in The Woodlands in 2007 along with 24 major  
16 events for his nonprofit organization, the Kerrville Special Events  
17 Association; Mr. Kennedy's production credits over the past six  
18 decades number more than 1,500, and the list of artists he has  
19 worked with reads like an encyclopedia of contemporary American  
20 music; the many honors accorded this industry luminary through the  
21 years include the Armstrong Foundation Award for FM Broadcasting  
22 Excellence from Columbia University and a Lifetime Achievement  
23 Award from the World Folk Music Association; and

24           WHEREAS, Although it is impossible to gauge the full effect  
25 Rod Kennedy has had on Texas music, it is clear that the best way to  
26 celebrate his still-evolving legacy is to continue to enjoy and  
27 support the rich creativity he has nurtured; now, therefore, be it

1           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas  
2 Legislature hereby commend Rod Kennedy for his enormous  
3 contributions to music in the Lone Star State and beyond and extend  
4 to him sincere best wishes for a very happy birthday; and, be it  
5 further

6           RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
7 prepared for Mr. Kennedy as an expression of high regard by the  
8 Texas House of Representatives.