

By: Cain

H.R. No. 135

R E S O L U T I O N

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 cohosts, 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 House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
7 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Joseph Donald
8 Meredith and extend sincere sympathy to the members of his family:
9 to his wife, Susan; to his children, Mary Donna, Michael, and
10 Heather; to his brother, Jack; and to his other relatives and many
11 friends; and, be it 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 adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Don
15 Meredith.