

By: Patrick

H.R. No. 396

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The life of a respected figure in the Texas music
2 community drew to a close with the passing of Johnnie Ray High, Jr.,
3 of Bedford on March 17, 2010, at the age of 80; and

4 WHEREAS, As the founder and owner of Johnnie High's Country
5 Music Revue, this noted impresario helped launch the careers of
6 numerous entertainment stars, and his long-running variety show was
7 beloved by countless North Texas music fans and musicians; and

8 WHEREAS, Born on May 1, 1929, in Robinson, Mr. High grew up in
9 McGregor and got his hands on his first guitar at age 13; a year
10 later, he began his own live radio show in Waco, singing and playing
11 for the station's early morning listeners five days a week; and

12 WHEREAS, Though he was a skilled musician in his own right, he
13 later became increasingly interested in helping others to find a
14 place in the spotlight; in 1974, he and a partner bought the Palace
15 Theatre in Grapevine and began presenting the Grapevine Opry, which
16 later developed into Johnnie High's Country Music Revue; rather
17 than focusing on established stars, Mr. High specialized in
18 developing new talent, and he soon proved his gift for recognizing
19 exceptional performers; and

20 WHEREAS, During the 35 years that he produced his weekly
21 show, many of the artists he featured went on to major show business
22 success, among them LeAnn Rimes, the Dixie Chicks, Lee Ann Womack,
23 and Gary Morris; while this generous promoter had a well-deserved
24 reputation for creating stars, he was equally devoted to less

1 famous individuals seeking to develop their musical talents; each
2 year, hundreds of people took part in his show's open auditions, and
3 Mr. High was renowned for the kind advice and encouragement that he
4 provided to each of them; and

5 WHEREAS, The show moved to the Will Rogers Coliseum in Fort
6 Worth after its initial years in Grapevine, and it was later staged
7 at the Shannon Auditorium in Haltom City; since 1995, it has been
8 based at the Arlington Music Hall, and its presence there played a
9 part in sparking a resurgence in the city's central business
10 district; in recognition of Mr. High's contributions to the local
11 community, he was named the city's Man of the Year in 1999 and was
12 inducted into the Arlington Business Hall of Fame in 2007; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. High also gave back to his fellow citizens by
14 supporting worthwhile causes such as the American Cancer Society
15 and the American Heart Association; his humanitarian work was
16 acknowledged when he received the Anson Jones Award from the Fort
17 Worth Scottish Rite Foundation in 2003, and his honors also
18 included induction into the Texas Gospel Music Hall of Fame and the
19 Miss Texas Organization Hall of Fame; and

20 WHEREAS, In all of his endeavors, Mr. High enjoyed the love
21 and support of his wife, Wanda, and the two enjoyed a rewarding
22 marriage that spanned 61 years; he had the satisfaction of having
23 several members of his family go to work at the revue, including his
24 granddaughter, Ashley Smith, who has performed on the show since
25 childhood and cohosted it with her grandfather in recent years; and

26 WHEREAS, With his dedication and his passion for the music he
27 loved, Johnnie High pioneered an iconic Texas entertainment show

1 that has had an enduring and positive influence on numerous people
2 over the course of three and a half decades, and his contributions
3 to country music and to his community will continue to be
4 appreciated for years to come; now, therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
6 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Johnnie Ray High, Jr.,
7 and extend deepest condolences to the members of his family: to his
8 wife, Wanda High; to his daughter, Luanne Dorman, and her husband,
9 Johnny; to his grandchildren, Ashley Smith, Trey Dorman and his
10 wife, Ashley, and Jared Dorman; and to his other relatives and
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 Johnnie
15 High.