

By: Darby

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R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Lone Star State lost an accomplished native son
2 with the passing of novelist and journalist Elmer Kelton of San
3 Angelo on August 22, 2009, at the age of 83; and

4 WHEREAS, Born on April 29, 1926, at Horse Camp in Andrews
5 County, Elmer Stephen Kelton was descended from cowboys and
6 ranchers; his great-grandfather came to West Texas in the 1870s
7 with a covered wagon and a string of horses, and his father, Robert
8 William "Buck" Kelton, was the foreman and eventual manager of the
9 McElroy Ranch in Crane and Upton Counties; and

10 WHEREAS, Elmer Kelton was the oldest of four sons and, by his
11 own admission, the worst cowboy of the bunch; he decided at an early
12 age that if he couldn't be a cowboy, he would at least write about
13 them, and he was encouraged in this endeavor by his mother, Neta
14 Beatrice "Bea" Kelton, a former schoolteacher; he entered The
15 University of Texas at Austin at the age of 16 and enrolled in
16 journalism classes; and

17 WHEREAS, In the mid-1940s, Mr. Kelton served in Europe as an
18 infantryman during the final months of World War II; while
19 stationed in Austria, he met his future wife, Anni Lipp, whom he
20 married in 1947; he went on to earn his bachelor's degree in
21 journalism from UT the following year; and

22 WHEREAS, Mr. Kelton was the farm-and-ranch editor for the *San*
23 *Angelo Standard-Times* from 1948 to 1963; he later spent five years
24 as associate editor of *Sheep and Goat Raisers' Magazine* and more

1 than two decades as editor of *Livestock Weekly* before retiring in
2 1990; and

3 WHEREAS, His career as a Western writer began in 1948, when he
4 sold a story to *Ranch Romances* magazine for \$50; he published his
5 first novel, *Hot Iron*, in 1955, and writing mainly in his spare
6 time, he went on to author or contribute to more than 60 books,
7 including several volumes of Western art, a memoir, *Sandhills Boy*,
8 and many works of fiction; and

9 WHEREAS, Insightful portrayals of West Texans, Mr. Kelton's
10 novels were admired by readers and critics alike for their keen
11 attention to detail, moral complexity, and psychological realism;
12 he wasn't interested in writing simplistic Western characters who
13 were "seven feet tall and invincible," he once said, adding, "my
14 characters are five-eight and nervous"; and

15 WHEREAS, In *The Time It Never Rained*, he vividly evoked the
16 struggles of a rancher during a devastating drought in the 1950s; in
17 *The Good Old Boys*, which was made into a television movie directed
18 by and starring Tommy Lee Jones, he told the story of an aging
19 cowboy grappling with changing times at the turn of the 20th
20 century; and

21 WHEREAS, Often bestsellers, his books also won numerous
22 accolades; seven of his titles earned the Spur Award from the
23 Western Writers of America, and three received Western Heritage
24 Awards from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum; Mr.
25 Kelton himself was honored with both the Owen Wister Award for
26 lifetime achievement and the Lone Star Award for Lifetime
27 Achievement from the Larry McMurtry Center for Arts and Humanities

1 at Midwestern State University; in 1995, he was voted the best
2 Western writer of all time by members of the Western Writers of
3 America; and

4 WHEREAS, Throughout a long and prolific career, Mr. Kelton
5 enjoyed the love and support of his wife of 62 years as well as their
6 three children, Gary, Stephen, and Kathy; moreover, his family
7 included four grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and a
8 great-great-granddaughter; and

9 WHEREAS, Elmer Kelton wrote with deep reverence and
10 compassion about the people and landscape he loved; whether he was
11 evoking the stark beauty of the high plains or the pride and dignity
12 of hardworking people, he celebrated a rich culture and left a
13 lasting legacy that will endure as long as the wind blows over West
14 Texas; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
16 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life and accomplishments of
17 Elmer Kelton; and, be it further

18 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
19 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
20 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Elmer
21 Kelton.