

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 302

In Memory
of
Deborah Lynn Friedman

WHEREAS, The great American composer and singer, Deborah Lynn "Debbie" Friedman, has been credited with creating the genre of contemporary Jewish worship music; and

WHEREAS, Debbie Friedman composed much of her early music while residing in Houston, Texas, from 1975 to 1984; and

WHEREAS, Her modern settings of traditional Hebrew liturgy and original compositions are sung by congregants in Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, and some Modern Orthodox Jewish synagogues, as well as in some Christian churches; and

WHEREAS, Debbie Friedman was called "the Joan Baez of Jewish song" by the Jewish newspaper *The Forward* and recorded more than 20 albums, which together sold half a million copies, and her lyrics have appeared on Hallmark greeting cards; and

WHEREAS, Her "Mi Shebeirach" prayer for healing is used by hundreds of congregations across America and is a central part of the Jewish healing movement, and her "Alef Bet Song" has been performed by Barney the purple dinosaur and has taught two generations of Jewish children the Hebrew alphabet; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Lynn Friedman was born in Utica, New York, to Freda and Gabriel Friedman; and

WHEREAS, Debbie moved with her family to Minnesota at age five, and she was a 1969 alumna of Highland Park High School in Saint Paul and a graduate of the after-school Hebrew school program at the Talmud Torah of Saint Paul; and

WHEREAS, She wrote her earliest songs as a song leader at the overnight camp Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, and recorded her first album, *Sing Unto God*, with the choir of her former high school in 1972; and

WHEREAS, Rabbi Samuel Karff brought her to Houston in 1975, where she taught at Temple Beth Israel and at Congregation Beth Yeshurun while writing many of her compositions and, coincidentally, living in the district of Representative Paul Colbert, who had been her Hebrew school classmate for nine years in Saint Paul; and

WHEREAS, After leaving her many friends in Houston, Debbie Friedman continued to compose and performed her songs in concerts at venues throughout the world, including her live recordings to sold-out audiences at Carnegie Hall and the Hotel del Coronado, despite struggling with a debilitating neurological condition; and

WHEREAS, The story of her music, as well as the challenges she faced in living with illness, were featured in a 2004 documentary film called *A Journey of Spirit*; and

WHEREAS, Debbie Friedman became a teacher at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, first in New York and later in Los Angeles, and served on the board of the Academy for Jewish Religion, California; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Lynn Friedman succumbed to pneumonia on January 9, 2011, and her memorial service on the opening day of this Legislative Session was attended and watched on the Internet by almost 10,000 of her family, friends, and admirers; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Lynn Friedman is survived by her mother, Freda, and her sisters, Cheryl Friedman and Barbara Egli; and

WHEREAS, Debbie Friedman's songs, including "Mi Shebeirach," "L'chi Lach," "Miriam's Song," "Oseh Shalom," "Not by Might," "And Thou Shalt Love," "The Alef Bet Song," "You Are the One," "This is the Day," and many, many others, have inspired and comforted millions and will continue to be sung and remembered as a fitting legacy to this caring and inspiring person; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 82nd Legislature, hereby pay tribute to the life of Deborah Lynn Friedman and extend sincere sympathy to the members of her family: to her mother, Freda; to her sisters, Cheryl and Barbara; and to her other relatives and many friends; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this Resolution be prepared for her family and that when the Texas Senate adjourns this day, February 23, 2011, which would have been her 60th birthday, it do so in memory of Debbie Friedman.

Shapiro

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on February 23, 2011, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate