

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 14

In Memory
of
John Graves

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas honors and commemorates the life of John Graves, who died July 31, 2013, at the age of 92; and

WHEREAS, John Graves was a giant of Texas letters whose writing evoked a state both magnificent and unforgiving and balanced history, folklore, environmental observations, and personal narrative in a cohesive whole; and

WHEREAS, Born August 6, 1920, in Fort Worth, he grew up exploring the Trinity River bottoms and taking part in hunting trips in South Texas with his father and uncles; after graduating from Rice University, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served in the Pacific theater during World War II, earning a Purple Heart and rising to the rank of captain; and

WHEREAS, After the war, he earned a master's degree from Columbia University and became an English professor at The University of Texas at Austin; he soon became disillusioned with teaching and embarked on a period of wandering and reflection, during which he traveled and lived abroad and wrote for magazines and literary quarterlies; and

WHEREAS, He returned to Fort Worth in 1957, and he took a position teaching creative writing at Texas Christian University; he fell in love with and married Jane Cole, and the couple raised two daughters, Helen and Sally; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Graves also rediscovered the Texas wildlife and history that had captivated him as a young man; among the pieces he wrote during this time was a short story entitled "The Last Running," which was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* and was reprinted in a collection of best American short stories; and

WHEREAS, When the federal government announced a plan to build a series of dams along the Brazos River, turning it into a series of lakes, he undertook a 175-mile canoe trip down the river as a farewell to a waterway he had fished in and explored as a youth; he wrote an article for *Holiday* magazine about his trip, describing his journey and relating the history of the area, including the encounters between the Comanche people and the Anglo-Celtic Texans settling the region; and

WHEREAS, He expanded the article into a book, *Goodbye to a River*, an elegy for an earlier, wild, unreconstructed Texas that has been called the finest book ever written about the state; it was nominated for a National Book Award and was the first book in a set that became known as the Brazos Trilogy, which included *Hard Scrabble* and *From a Limestone Ledge*; and

WHEREAS, John Graves was a man of vision, strength, and courage whose deep love of Texas and singular ability to describe its lost frontier will enrich the lives of countless readers for years to come; and

WHEREAS, A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, he leaves behind memories that will be treasured forever by his family and his many friends; now, therefore, be it

S.R. No. 14

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 83rd Legislature, 3rd Called Session, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of John Graves; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for his family as an expression of deepest sympathy from the Texas Senate, and that when the Senate adjourns this day, it do so in memory of John Graves.

Birdwell, Estes

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on August 5, 2013, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate