

By: Sheffield

H.R. No. 126

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The State of Texas lost a rodeo legend with the  
2 passing of G. K. Lewallen of Stephenville on December 10, 2014, at  
3 the age of 95; and

4           WHEREAS, Born on January 14, 1919, and raised in Blackwell,  
5 Mr. Lewallen began competing in rodeos during his youth and joined  
6 the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association in 1937; riding in rough  
7 stock events, he performed in arenas around the country, suffering  
8 broken bones and numerous other serious injuries while proving his  
9 exceptional courage and ability; and

10           WHEREAS, Undaunted by the dangers of rodeo life, Mr. Lewallen  
11 claimed numerous championship titles, and in 1945 he took first  
12 place in bull riding at the World Champion Rodeo, held at Madison  
13 Square Garden in New York City; his victory earned him a hand-tooled  
14 leather saddle that was one of the most prized mementos from his  
15 outstanding career; and

16           WHEREAS, In 1944, Mr. Lewallen married the former Ethel  
17 Spanier, whom he met while she was working as a member of the  
18 Rockettes dance company in New York, and the couple ultimately  
19 became the parents of three children, Nolan, Cindra, and Tula; they  
20 moved to Stephenville after Mr. Lewallen retired from the rodeo  
21 arena in 1956 and soon opened a western store, the Grand Entry; the  
22 business grew out of an enterprise Mr. Lewallen had begun during  
23 his time as a competitor, when he would sell hats, boots, and other  
24 merchandise to fans attending the rodeos; and

1           WHEREAS, This determined Texan became a prominent figure in  
2 the local community, and he helped shape Stephenville's image as  
3 the self-proclaimed Cowboy Capital of the World; he was an original  
4 member of the Erath County Livestock Association board of directors  
5 and a member of the Stephenville Chamber of Commerce board; in  
6 addition, he was a founding director of InterBank, and the  
7 financial institution's Bluff Dale branch was dedicated in his  
8 honor; and

9           WHEREAS, In recent decades, Mr. Lewallen earned a number of  
10 prestigious accolades; in addition to becoming a member of the  
11 Stephenville Cowboy Capital Walk of Fame, he was inducted into the  
12 National Cowboy Hall of Fame in 1994 and the Texas Cowboy Hall of  
13 Fame in 1997; after Ethel Lewallen passed away in 1988, he was  
14 fortunate to find love again and married the former Nita Brooks;  
15 they shared a rewarding marriage that spanned nearly a quarter  
16 century before his death; and

17           WHEREAS, G. K. Lewallen was a true cowboy, a hardworking  
18 gentleman who accomplished much but also remained humble and  
19 thankful, and his contributions to the Stephenville community and  
20 to the sport of rodeo will continue to be appreciated for years to  
21 come; now, therefore, be it

22           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas  
23 Legislature pay tribute to the memory of G. K. Lewallen and extend  
24 sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his wife, Nita;  
25 to his children, Nolan Lewallen, Cindra Elms and her husband,  
26 Chick, and Tula Vassel and her husband, Robert; to his  
27 stepchildren, Louis Brooks and his wife, Charlotte, and Leigh Odom

1 and her husband, Doug; to his grandchildren, Chad Elms and his wife,  
2 Stephanie, Chayla Horan and her husband, Ken, Clint Elms, Conner  
3 Elms and his wife, Caitlin, Garrett Vassel, Aaron Lewallen and his  
4 wife, Stacey, Noelle Lewallen, Seth Lewallen, and Lauren Penner and  
5 her husband, Alex; to his step-grandchildren, Lorie Lawrence and  
6 her husband, Charles Ralph, Shasta Brooks and her husband, Scott  
7 Zogbaum, Boyd Brooks, and Brooks Lawrence and his wife, Christe; to  
8 his 11 great-grandchildren; and to his other relatives and many  
9 friends; and, be it further

10         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
11 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
12 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of G. K.  
13 Lewallen.