

By: Dale

H.R. No. 1773

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The passing of Walter "Yukon" Yates of Cedar Park on
2 March 2, 2015, at the age of 90, provides a fitting occasion to
3 reflect on the extraordinary life of a remarkable man; and

4 WHEREAS, Born on October 19, 1924, to Andrew Jesse and Mae
5 Elizabeth Yates, Walter Yates was one of eight children in his
6 family; he grew up in the Ozarks, on what is now known as Yates
7 Mountain in northwest Arkansas, where he learned to hunt and fish as
8 a boy; inspired by author Jack London, he developed a true passion
9 for adventure and exploration at a young age, and he actively
10 pursued a "master's in life" for the rest of his days; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Yates joined the United States Marine Corps on
12 November 29, 1941; he completed his training on the island of Samoa
13 in the South Pacific, and had his 18th birthday on the island of
14 Guadalcanal; not long after, he was severely wounded by a mortar
15 shell, and he was discharged as fully disabled in June 1945,
16 although he refused to ever let his disability get in his way; and

17 WHEREAS, After acquiring an interest in real estate,
18 Mr. Yates began his career as a land developer; he considered his
19 proudest professional achievement to be Breakaway Park, a fly-in
20 community in Cedar Park where he lived for a number of years and
21 where many aviation enthusiasts still reside; and

22 WHEREAS, An accomplished pilot himself, Mr. Yates was
23 perhaps best known for his quests in Alaska and the Yukon Territory
24 of Canada; he spent a year exploring ghost towns and abandoned gold

1 mines, achieving access to remote areas with his helicopter; in
2 1975, he filmed a documentary called *Breakaway*, which captures his
3 experiences living off the land in a log cabin he built in the
4 Alaskan wilderness; when a malfunction caused his helicopter to
5 crash in an isolated part of British Columbia in 1978, he survived
6 alone for two weeks with a broken back before being rescued; and

7 WHEREAS, Eventually, Mr. Yates set about writing a memoir to
8 chronicle his expeditions in the far north as well as his years in
9 Arkansas and Texas; the book *Breakaway* was published in 2011, and a
10 second volume, *Return to Post River | The Last True Frontier*, is
11 forthcoming; a man of many talents, he used his spare time to build
12 two helicopters and a two-seater airplane, and he also enjoyed
13 restoring old cars; and

14 WHEREAS, Although Walter Yates is deeply missed, memories of
15 his enthusiasm for life and adventure remain to inspire those he
16 leaves behind, and he will forever hold a special place in the
17 hearts of all those who were fortunate enough to know him; now,
18 therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
20 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Walter "Yukon"
21 Yates and extend heartfelt sympathy to the members of his family: to
22 his wife of 37 years, Tracy Yates; to his first wife and the mother
23 of his children, Edith Williams; to his children, Sharolyn Yates,
24 Susan McLaughlin and her husband, Bob, and Jay Yates and his
25 fiancée, Nancy Grob; to his stepson, Greg Malone, and his wife,
26 Lisa; to his brother, Donald Yates, and his wife, Lois; to his
27 sister, Georgeanne Jones; to his 19 grandchildren and

1 great-grandchildren; and to his other relatives and friends; and,
2 be it further

3 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
4 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
5 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Walter
6 Yates.