

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 212

**WHEREAS**, King Ranch, whose history spans more than 160 years, has left an indelible imprint on the story of Texas, and its renown has spread far beyond the borders of this state; and

**WHEREAS**, Richard King, the founder of the ranch, was a New York native who had run away from an apprenticeship in Manhattan as a child and later became a steamboat captain; in 1847, he joined his friend Mifflin Kenedy on the Rio Grande, where they ferried troops and supplies for the United States Army during the Mexican War; both men remained on the border after the war's end and became wealthy as steamboat entrepreneurs; and

**WHEREAS**, Ever on the alert for business opportunities, King spied possibilities in the land lying between the Rio Grande and the Nueces River, an area known variously as the Nueces Strip and the Wild Horse Desert; in 1853 he and a partner, Gideon Lewis, purchased in that area a 15,500-acre Mexican land grant known as the Rincón de Santa Gertrudis; over the ensuing years, first with Lewis, then with Kenedy, and ultimately as sole proprietor, he continued to expand his ranch holdings, amassing one of the largest spreads in Texas; and

**WHEREAS**, King quickly adapted to Spanish ranching culture; while on a cattle-buying trip in Tamaulipas, he persuaded some 100 residents of the village of Cruillas to return with him to Texas; they settled on the ranch and became known as los Kineños, or "King's people"; over the years, their skills as horsemen and as stockmen, skills that have been passed down through generations of descendants, have contributed immeasurably to the ranch's mystique and to its success; and

**WHEREAS**, In the years following the Civil War, King played a prominent role in the emergence of the Texas cattle industry; longhorns bearing his Running W brand were among the first to be trailed north to the railheads in Kansas and to new ranges in the American West; in addition, King was among the earliest ranchers to fence his land, to undertake the large-scale raising of livestock, and to follow a program of scientific breeding; and

**WHEREAS**, Richard King died in 1885, leaving his widow, Henrietta King, to preserve and enlarge the ranch he had built; Henrietta King had already proved capable of the task, as she had largely overseen the ranch during the Civil War, while her husband was engaged in transporting Confederate cotton across the Rio Grande to Mexico; she appointed Robert Justus Kleberg, their legal advisor, as ranch manager, and in 1886, Kleberg became a member of the family with his marriage to the Kings' daughter Alice; over the next three decades, Kleberg led in eliminating a devastating cattle disease called Texas fever by pioneering the use of cattle dipping vats; he also began the breeding program that produced the world-famed Santa Gertrudis beef cattle; and

**WHEREAS**, In the 20th century, King Ranch diversified into a number of other areas; it began breeding and racing both quarter horses and Thoroughbreds, and it claimed the 1946 Triple Crown winner, Assault, and the 1950 Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes winner, Middleground; the ranch also became involved in oil and gas production and acquired interests in such industries as timber and real estate; in addition, the ranch developed large-scale hunting operations, both through leasing land to hunters and by providing guided public hunts; today, King Ranch has become noted as a leader in environmental stewardship, game management, and wildlife conservation; strongly supportive of education, it has endowed a professorship in the McCombs School of Business at The University of Texas at Austin and contributed generously to institutes for ranch management and wildlife research at Texas A&M University--Kingsville; and

**WHEREAS**, King Ranch now encompasses 825,000 acres, spread across six counties; in 1966, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

**WHEREAS**, Throughout its history, King Ranch has been a recognized innovator in ranching and livestock practices, and as awareness grows of the need to live in harmony with the natural world, this legendary ranch is playing a vital role in saving the rich natural heritage of the Lone Star State; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 84th Legislature, hereby recognize February 26, 2015, as King Ranch Day at the State Capitol and extend to the ranch's owners, managers, and staff sincere best wishes for continued success; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, That an official copy of this Resolution be prepared for King Ranch as an expression of high regard from the Texas Senate.

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on February 23, 2015.

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Secretary of the Senate

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Member, Texas Senate