

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 125

In Memory
of
Lonnie Pilgrim

WHEREAS, The life of a Lone Star business legend drew to a close with the passing of Lonnie Pilgrim of Pittsburg on July 21, 2017, at the age of 89; and

WHEREAS, "Bo" Pilgrim was born in Pine on May 8, 1928, to Gertrude Gunn Pilgrim and Alonzo Monroe Pilgrim, who owned the local grocery store; after his father died and his mother remarried, Mr. Pilgrim went to live on his grandmother's farm, and as a teenager, he took jobs working on farms, hauling gravel, picking cotton, and bagging groceries; and

WHEREAS, Following his graduation from high school, Mr. Pilgrim became a partner in a feed store that his brother Aubrey had recently bought in Pittsburg, and together they began to expand the business; while serving in the United States Army, Mr. Pilgrim saw large feed operations in California, and after returning to Pittsburg, he and his brother began to invest in hatcheries and chicken processing facilities; and

WHEREAS, The Pittsburg feed store would grow into the Pilgrim's Pride Corporation, one of the largest poultry producers in the nation; after Aubrey Pilgrim died of a heart attack in 1966, Bo Pilgrim developed a leaner, healthier chicken product, with less fat and cholesterol, as well as nutritionally enriched eggs; he also developed a way to sell whole chickens with the bones removed, which won international attention; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Pilgrim was the company's chief executive officer from 1968 to 1998, and during that time, he helped it grow to include operations in 17 states and Mexico, with more than 35,000 employees; further he provided jobs and opportunities for thousands, and he blessed countless people with his generosity; in addition, he became the company's spokesperson, appearing in a series of witty ads in which he wore a business suit and a black pilgrim's hat; in later years, he saw the company through upturns and downturns, and though he retired in 2010, he continued to serve as a director until 2012; and

WHEREAS, A devoted husband and father, Mr. Pilgrim shared 61 years of marriage with the former Patricia "Patty" Redding, and he took great pride in his three children, Ken, Patrick, and Greta; with the passing years, he saw his family grow to include six grandchildren, Clayton, Jake, Lonnie, Greta, Chesley, and Shelby, and three great-grandchildren, Kate, Emily, and Gracie; and

WHEREAS, The Christian faith was an important part of Mr. Pilgrim's life; in addition to being a member of First Baptist Church in Pittsburg, he created a prayer park in the city complete with a 75-foot tower and found numerous other ways to

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share the Gospel message with others; he further benefited area residents through a range of philanthropic efforts and through the establishment of Pilgrim Bank; and

WHEREAS, Today, a 40-foot bust of Bo Pilgrim in his suit and pilgrim's hat stands outside his company's plants, a reminder of the towering figure he cut in his community, his state, and his industry, and his accomplishments as a business and civic leader and a champion for his faith will resonate for many years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 85th Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the memory of Lonnie "Bo" Pilgrim and extend heartfelt sympathy to all who mourn his passing; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for his family and that when the Texas Senate adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Bo Pilgrim.

Hughes

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on August 10, 2017, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate