H.R. No. 1708

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, A full and generous life has drawn to a close with the death of veteran West Texas aviator Wilson Connell Edwards Sr. on May 3, 2019, at the age of 85; and

WHEREAS, Connie Edwards was born in Big Spring on April 25, 1934; after completing his education, he earned a pilot's license and joined the Army National Guard in 1951, serving throughout the Caribbean, Central America, and the United States over the next nine years; in 1954, he and his brother, W. P. "Budo" Edwards, established the Edwards Petroleum Company, and in 1959, the brothers took over their family's ranching and petroleum operations in Howard and Glasscock Counties; and

WHEREAS, In the late 1960s, Mr. Edwards was chief stunt pilot for the movie *Battle of Britain*, flying a variety of World War II military aircraft; during filming, he belly-landed a burning Spitfire fighter plane with no injuries to himself or others, earning a commendation from the Royal Air Force; he owned several vintage aircraft, including a TBM Avenger torpedo bomber that appeared in the films *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Bermuda Triangle*; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Edwards was a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and president of the Big Spring chapter of the Air Force Association; he also served as accident prevention counselor for the Lubbock district of the Federal Aviation Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation; in addition, he was a director of State National Bank, and he cofounded TexaStone Quarries; and

WHEREAS, This distinguished pilot earned many awards over the years, including the Meritorious Service Award from the U.S. Navy, the FAA Special Recognition Award, the President's Pilot Award, the John Henry Towers Award from the Naval Aviation Commandery, the Seaplane Pilot of the Year Award from the Seaplane Pilots Association, and honorary wings from the U.S. Coast Guard and the air forces of Britain, Spain, Canada, and Portugal; in 2016, he was inducted into the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, In all his endeavors, Mr. Edwards enjoyed the love and support of his wife, Brenda, and he was the proud father of three children, Patricia, Nicholas, and the late Wilson C. "Tex" Edwards; he was also devoted to his two stepdaughters, Stefanie and Tonya, and his eight grandchildren, Andrew, Blake, Haylee, Daniel, Emilee, Seth, Wilson, and Aislin; and

WHEREAS, Connie Edwards brought joy to innumerable people through his warmth, wonderful sense of humor, and trove of amazing stories, and his spirit of adventure will remain a source of inspiration to all who were privileged to know him; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Wilson Connell Edwards Sr. and extend heartfelt sympathy to his family and many friends; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Connie Edwards.

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 1708 was unanimously adopted by a rising vote of the House on May 21, 2019.

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Chief Clerk of the House