

By: Rodríguez

S.C.R. No. 60

1 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The McDonald Observatory is the renowned  
3 astronomical research unit of The University of Texas at Austin and  
4 is situated on two peaks in the Davis Mountains, where the night  
5 skies are among the darkest in the continental United States; and

6 WHEREAS, The year 2019 is a special year for the McDonald  
7 Observatory, as it marks the 80th anniversary of its establishment  
8 and the 80th year since the dedication of the Otto Struve Telescope;  
9 still in use today, the telescope was the second-largest telescope  
10 in the world at the time and promised exciting new insights into the  
11 universe; and

12 WHEREAS, This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the  
13 first projection of light from the earth to the moon; observatory  
14 researchers succeeded in the celestial projection by aligning the  
15 Harlan J. Smith Telescope with optics placed on the lunar surface by  
16 the Apollo astronauts; this scientific feat enabled researchers to  
17 accurately determine the distance between the earth and the moon  
18 and the precise orbit of the moon; and

19 WHEREAS, The observatory has continued to lead the way in  
20 pioneering research through its impressive array of telescopes and  
21 astronomical monitoring systems; in 2017, the Hobby-Eberly  
22 Telescope began collecting data for the Dark Energy Experiment, a  
23 project that has yielded the largest map of the universe ever  
24 produced; and

1           WHEREAS, The University of Texas at Austin has partnered with  
2 other universities and research institutions around the world to  
3 construct the Giant Magellan Telescope in Chile; the expansive,  
4 next-generation telescope will help researchers better understand  
5 the origins of planetary systems, stars, galaxies, and black holes;  
6 and

7           WHEREAS, The McDonald Observatory has earned a reputation for  
8 excellence in kindergarten through 12th grade astronomy education  
9 and public outreach programs and has become one of the state's  
10 greatest resources for teachers, students, astronomy enthusiasts,  
11 and curious members of the public; and

12           WHEREAS, The McDonald Observatory has kept the Lone Star  
13 State at the forefront of astronomical research; observations and  
14 discoveries made at the research center have had profound  
15 implications for the development of astronomical study and will  
16 continue to shape our understanding of the universe long into the  
17 future; now, therefore, be it

18           RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas  
19 hereby commend the staff and researchers at the McDonald  
20 Observatory for pushing the frontiers of technology and science and  
21 congratulate them on 80 years of research on the properties of the  
22 universe; and, be it further

23           RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be prepared for the  
24 observatory as an expression of esteem from the Texas Legislature.