**SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 232**

**In Memory**

**of**

**Charley Frank Pride**

**WHEREAS**, The Senate of the State of Texas honors and commemorates the life of Charley Frank Pride, a pioneering country music legend, who died on December 12, 2020, at the age of 86; and

**WHEREAS**, A native of Sledge, Mississippi, Charley Pride was born on March 18, 1934, as the fourth of 11 children in a family of sharecroppers; he developed a love of baseball and music at a young age, and his mother bought him his first guitar when he was 14 years old; and

**WHEREAS**, Charley left home for Memphis to seek out a career in professional baseball, and in 1952, he was signed by the Memphis Red Sox, and he went on to become an All-Star pitcher in the Negro American League; he was drafted into the United States Army in 1956, and he married Ebby Rozene Cohrad, his best friend and spiritual partner, while on leave that same year; after his military service, he played baseball on several minor league teams in Montana while also working as a smelter and performing at clubs in a four-piece band, the Night Hawks; his rise to musical stardom began in 1965, when he moved to Nashville and the influential country music producer Chet Atkins signed him to the RCA Victor record label; and

**WHEREAS**, Charley released his first single through RCA Victor in 1966; he landed on the country music charts with his third single, "Just Between You and Me," and he became the first black performer to appear at the Grand Ole Opry since founding member DeFord Bailey appeared there more than 25 years earlier; in 1971, he released his biggest hit, "Kiss an Angel Good Morning," a song that reached the pop music charts and was among the Top-10 songs on the adult contemporary charts; he also earned Grammy Awards in 1971 for Best Sacred Performance and Best Gospel Performance and was named the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year, and the following year, he won a Grammy Award for Best Male Country Vocal Performance; and

**WHEREAS**, Over the next five decades, Charley amassed more than 50 Top-10 country hits, including 30 Number-1 hits; he routinely was sold out at American venues, and he developed a strong and loyal following in Ireland and the United Kingdom, which led to the sale of millions of albums worldwide; and

**WHEREAS**, Charley and his beloved wife, Rozene, settled in Dallas during his music career, and he remained a treasured honorary Texan for the rest of his life; he was a devoted father to three children, Carlton Kraig, Charles Dion, and Angela Rozene, and his five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren enriched his life immeasurably; and

**WHEREAS**, A lifelong baseball fan, Charley often sang the National Anthem at Texas Rangers games, and in 2021, the team dedicated a baseball field in his name and established the Charley Pride Internship for minority college students to train for careers in baseball; and

**WHEREAS**, Charley was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry in 1993, and he was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1999; in 2000, he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame; his trailblazing contributions to country music's rich heritage were recognized with the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, Known for his smooth baritone voice and his friendly, graceful demeanor, Charley Pride remained kindhearted and humble, even after his remarkable talents brought him to the height of celebrity; his gentle presence inspired all who were blessed with his company, and his contributions to American music will continue to be appreciated for generations to come; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 87th Legislature, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Charley Frank Pride; and, be it further

**RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for his family as an expression of deepest sympathy from the Texas Senate and that when the Senate adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Charley Pride.

West

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| Alvarado | Hancock | Nichols |
| Bettencourt | Hinojosa | Paxton |
| Birdwell | Huffman | Perry |
| Blanco | Hughes | Powell |
| Buckingham | Johnson | Schwertner |
| Campbell | Kolkhorst | Seliger |
| Creighton | Lucio | Springer |
| Eckhardt | Menéndez | Taylor |
| Gutierrez | Miles | Whitmire |
| Hall | Nelson | Zaffirini |

Patrick, President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_     President of the Senate     I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 12, 2021, by a rising vote.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_     Secretary of the Senate\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_      Member, Texas Senate