

By: Eckhardt

S.R. No. 190

SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas honors and commemorates the life of Mary C. Nelson, who died January 8, 2023, at the age of 70; and

WHEREAS, Mary Nelson was a treasured Texan and a beloved citizen of Austin who led a life of purpose through her tireless dedication to her endeavors, her family, and her community; and

WHEREAS, Mary was born on January 22, 1952, in Houston; the eldest child of a United States Air Force officer, Mary lived in locations throughout the United States and England before her family moved to Austin in 1970; she attended The University of Texas while working as a cinema projectionist at local movie theaters, and she eventually became the first female union master projectionist in the country; and

WHEREAS, Intelligent and driven, Mary served on countless movie and commercial sets throughout her career and skillfully performed a variety of roles including electrician, key grip, key rigging grip, and best boy; she was a lifelong advocate of unions and a champion of labor rights, and she was an active member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts union; she served as business agent of the union's Local 205, and she also served as the business agent for the Film and Movie Mechanics Local 484; and

WHEREAS, A trailblazer in many regards, Mary found success in a male-dominated industry, and her strength, expertise, and leadership broke barriers for women in entertainment production; in the 1970s, she trained as a power lifter and competed against men, often winning her competitions at a time when few or no women competed; she served as the first female director of production at the Paramount and Stateside Theaters in Austin, and she served for several years as the director of production for the Moontower Comedy Festival; and

WHEREAS, Mary and her beloved husband, Sandy Gilzow, started their own company, Shur-Rig, in 2012 to provide high-quality rigging for art and entertainment installations across the state; for the past decade, their passion for production and keen attention to detail has helped great works of art come to life, and Mary found it especially rewarding to work to help low-income and community theaters succeed in their productions; and

WHEREAS, Mary was a loving wife, mother, and sister and a trusted mentor and friend to many; her generous and courageous spirit and her loving and joyful example were a source of inspiration in the lives of others, and she leaves behind memories that will long be cherished by her family and friends and by all who were privileged to share in her life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 88th Legislature, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Mary C. Nelson; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for her 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 Mary C. Nelson.