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SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 634

Originated in Senate

Arzwell

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 634

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF RENOWNED MISSISSIPPI WOODCARVER GEORGE BERRY, SR., AND EXTENDING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of renowned Mississippi Woodcarver and Artist George Berry, Sr., of Pearl, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, George Berry has been carving wood since the age of seven, when his father taught him how to handle a knife. He is known for his distinctive carvings of animals which he creates using a pocketknife, and he exhibits his work and demonstrates woodcarving throughout the South and Southwest. Mr. Berry has been an influential traditional Artist in Mississippi since moving here from his native Oklahoma in 1972 to teach at the Piney Woods School; and

WHEREAS, George grew up the youngest of eight children on his parents' farm near Vinita, Oklahoma. He moved to Mississippi in 1972 to teach Industrial Arts at the Piney Woods Country Life

School. In 1985, he retired from Piney Woods School to devote his time to his woodcarving; and

WHEREAS, during the 50 years that he was carving wooden pieces, George exhibited his work, demonstrated his craft, and conducted workshops in woodcarving at numerous major festivals, including the Mississippi Arts Festival (Jackson, MS), Festival USA on the Strand (Galveston, TX), the Festival of Pennsylvania Folklife Bicentennial (Philadelphia, PA), and the Mississippi Pavilion at the World's Fair (New Orleans, LA). Two of his carved sculptures traveled with the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1976; and

WHEREAS, the official State Arts Agency of Mississippi, the Mississippi Arts Commission, has honored George in many ways. In 1996 and 1997, he was selected to create the carved pieces which were presented to the winners of the prestigious Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts. In 2001, he was the recipient of the Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts for Artistic Achievement. He was awarded a Folk Artist Fellowship from the Arts Commission in 1999, and in 2002 he received an Arts Commission Apprenticeship Grant to teach woodcarving to students. On October 29, 2013, United States Representative Gregg Harper (R-Miss.) honored George Berry, Sr., of Mississippi for his lifetime of achievements as both an Artist and Teacher. He is listed on the Mississippi Arts Commission Artist Roster; and

WHEREAS, George taught weekly woodcarving classes for the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi and was a frequent Instructor for the Allison Wells School of Arts and Crafts in Canton, Mississippi. Since 2001, he taught woodcarving classes at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, a Charter Member and Fellow of the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi, he was on the Guild's Board of Directors and served on the Standards Committee which juries the work of prospective members. In 1997, he received the Guild's Award for Lifetime Achievement and Professional Accomplishments. Other Awards and Honors include the 2003 Hometown Hero Shining Example Award, presented by the Jackson Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and the 2004 Mississippi Ageless Hero Award for Creativity, presented by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, George's carved wood sculptures are exhibited in Jackson's Old Capitol Museum and the Museum of Natural Science, as well as in the Laurence C. Jones Museum at the Piney Woods School, the Har-Ber Village in Grove, Oklahoma, and in private residences and offices throughout the United States. He was featured in *Chip Chats*, *Southern Living*, *Mississippi Outdoors*, and many other national and regional publications. He was pictured with his carving in the book, *Craft in America*, by Phyllis George, published in 1993. George was a frequent guest on "Mississippi Educational Television" and other area television and radio news and features programs; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Berry was a huge influence on woodcarvers. In October 2013, the guild dedicated a gallery named for him at the Mississippi Craft Center. "This is a tremendous loss for the Craftsmen's Guild and for everyone who knew and loved him," Guild Executive Director Nancy Perkins said. "As talented as he was, it will be his sweetness and the generosity with which he shared his gifts that I will miss most"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Berry had a strong commitment to artistic excellence and in sharing his art form with others. He taught his children a love and respect for woodcarving and passed this on to his grandchildren and hundreds of other children as he traveled the state each year. Mr. Berry was rarely without his favorite pocketknife and a sturdy twig or two that in a few seconds he could transform into a bouquet of delicately shaved flowers for an impromptu audience, because most of all, George Berry was a woodcarver; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby celebrate the life of renowned Mississippi Woodcarver George Berry, Sr., and extend the sympathy of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to

the surviving family of George Berry, forwarded to the Mississippi Arts Commission, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
March 27, 2014



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 28, 2014



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES