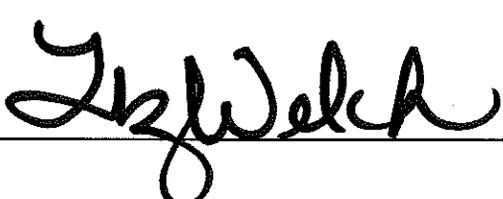


Chapter No. 01681  
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**SENATE  
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION  
No. 635**

Originated in Senate  Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 635

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A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE OF LEGENDARY BLUES HARMONICA PLAYER BUD SPIRES FROM BENTONIA, MISSISSIPPI.

WHEREAS, Bud Spires of Bentonia, Mississippi, passed away Thursday, March 20, 2014. He was 82. Benjamin (Blind Bud) Spires grew up near Bentonia, Mississippi, and played blues harp with Jack Owens; and

WHEREAS, in the book *The Land Where the Blues Began*, Alan Lomax describes Spires: "Bud was a one-man, red-hot singing orchestra, accompanying himself on the harmonica, putting rough, bluesy chords after some lines and squealed comments to underscore the images. Sometimes his instrument almost disappeared in his mouth as he both blew and sucked notes out of its metal reeds"; and

WHEREAS, Bud's mentor Jack Owens is buried in the Day Cemetery east of Bentonia. He left protégés Jimmy "Duck" Holmes, proprietor of the Blue Front Café, and Harmonica Player Benjamin "Bud" Spires, to carry on the Bentonia blues tradition. Bud

Spires was Owens' steadfast musical companion for some 30 years;  
and

WHEREAS, Bud Spires is a big part of the history of Bentonia School of Blues having rubbed shoulders with past greats. Bentonia School is unlike Delta Blues or any other blues. Instead, it has to do with a particular guitar tuning. Known as an open E minor chord or open D...point is it's different and unique. Actually it was said to be haunting at times. Some past Bentonia School Musicians were Skip James, Bukka White, Cornelius Bright, Bud Slater, Henry Stuckey and Jack Owens (actual name L.F. Nelson). Today the most well-known musician is the owner of the Blue Front Café, Jimmy "Duck" Holmes; and

WHEREAS, Bud Spires is the son of Arthur "Big Boy" Spires who recorded for Chicago Chess Records during the 1950s and 1960s. Bud was born May 20, 1931, just north of Bentonia in Anding, Mississippi. Not much more than a wide place in the road. Anding is located just off Highway 49 in Yazoo County. Bud got his first harp from Santa Claus and started playing at five years old. At the age of 12, he remembered hearing Cornelius Bright and Bud Slater playing in a juke joint and loved it. Bud wanted a guitar but settled for a harmonica; and

WHEREAS, Bud wasn't born blind. It came on slow, likely due to exposure to cotton pesticide. Once while chopping cotton with his mother, he was unable to see an airplane overhead. His vision

got progressively worse until he couldn't drive a tractor and went to work in the gin. Eventually he couldn't work at all; and

WHEREAS, he played with his good friend Jack Owens for over 30 years, from 1967 until Jack passed away. They can be seen on the 1990 Robert Mugge/Robert Palmer DVD "Deep Blues." Jack, who never really wanted to be a musician, instead was happy farming, owning a juke joint and making moonshine, passed away on February 9, 1997, in Yazoo City. And even though neither one liked airplanes, the two toured together all across the country; and

WHEREAS, one of just many quotes from Bud: "You know there's this field up over yonder, it's got the devil in it. It's haunted. 'Cause we can't see that devil, only animals can see it. One day I was on my horse comin' up on that field. My horse starts to jumpin' up and down, buckin' this way and that. Shakin' it's head. Yoo boy. I said to my horse, what you doin'? Cut it out. But my horse just kept on shakin' and buckin', so much I durn near fell off. I said to my horse, what's the matter with you, the devil got in you? My horse turned to me and said: Ain't no devil in me, that devil's over there in the field yonder"; and

WHEREAS, Bud travelled the music festival circuit in the United States and Europe throughout the final decades of his life, accompanied by his friend, Jack Owens; and it is with sadness that we note the passing of this Mississippi Delta Blues icon:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That

we do hereby commend the life of legendary Blues Harmonica Player Bud Spires from Bentonia, Mississippi, and extend the sympathy of the Legislature on his passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the surviving family of Bud Spires, 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