

By: Representative Eubanks

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 69

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LEGENDARY
2 RODEO CLOWN LECILE HARRIS AND EXPRESSING DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS
3 FAMILY AND FRIENDS UPON HIS PASSING.

4 WHEREAS, it is written in Ecclesiastes 3:1 that "To
5 everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under
6 the Heaven," and as such, on February 13, 2020, the immaculate
7 author and finisher of our soul's destiny summoned the mortal
8 presence of dearly beloved, Lecile Harris, to eternal rest,
9 rendering great sorrow and loss to his family and friends; and

10 WHEREAS, legendary rodeo clown Lecile Harris brought so much
11 joy to so many, and there is now a hush in our hearts as we come
12 together to pay our respects to the memory of one who has been
13 called to join that innumerable heavenly caravan; and

14 WHEREAS, born in Lake Cormorant, Mississippi, on November 6,
15 1936, Lecile and his family moved to Collierville, Tennessee,
16 where he lived until his passing, and he was preceded in death by
17 his parents Rubye and Marvin Harris; and



18 WHEREAS, Lecile Harris got his start in rodeo as a bull rider
19 and then a fill-in bullfighter while still in high school and
20 developed into one of the sport's most respected funnymen over a
21 career that has spanned more than half a century, and he was
22 called the "Dean of Rodeo Clowns/Bullfighters," he was PRCA Clown
23 of the Year in 1992, 1994, 1995 and 1996, and he was inducted into
24 the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame in 2007 and Bull-riding Hall of Fame,
25 Bull-fighters - Legends in 2020, having performed all over the
26 United States, as well as in Canada, Europe and Africa; and

27 WHEREAS, Lecile performed at more than 140 rodeos each year,
28 his timing, inventiveness and classic style was the envy of his
29 contemporaries, and he became well known for his signature end to
30 a performance — as The Original Bulldancer — in which he would
31 dance with a bull from the bucking stock; and

32 WHEREAS, Lecile's style is influenced by the work of several
33 comedians he grew up admiring, including Emmett Kelly, Red
34 Skelton, W.C. Fields and Laurel and Hardy, and the painted face he
35 used in his acts has been part of his persona since 1955 when he
36 was asked to serve as an emergency replacement at Sardis,
37 Mississippi, and used shoe polish and lipstick from the local drug
38 store to prepare; and

39 WHEREAS, the multi-talented Lecile was a football player at
40 the University of Tennessee-Martin, a session drummer and
41 songwriter in the Memphis area during the 1950s and early 1960s,
42 when Sun Records and Hi Records were in their peak, and having



43 performed on television and in films, he spent five years on the
44 TV series Hee Haw and appeared in the films Walking Tall: The
45 Final Chapter, The Last Days of Frank and Jesse James and W.W. and
46 the Dixie Dance Kings; and

47 WHEREAS, in his college years, Lecile started his sign making
48 company which he continued throughout his life, and nearly every
49 sign on the Collierville square was handcrafted by Lecile; and

50 WHEREAS, on August 11, 1957, Lecile Harris married the love
51 of his life, Ethel Bledsoe, and they had two sons, Matt and Chuck,
52 and one daughter, Christi, and he has since become a beloved
53 grandfather to four and a great-grandfather to five, and as much
54 as he was adored by hundreds of thousands of fans around the
55 world, Lecile was loved and cherished deeply by his family who
56 knew a different side of him; and

57 WHEREAS, somewhere between the fiercest of protectors and a
58 sweet gentle man with a golden heart, where tough love meets
59 compassion, and the first to lend a hand and the last to ask for
60 one, Lecile was a man of pure values, generosity and unwavering
61 authenticity; and

62 WHEREAS, in his passing, he leaves behind his wife, Ethel
63 Harris; sons, Matt (Joy) and Chuck Harris; daughter, Christi
64 Lalonde (Donny); sister, Mary Jo Wilson; nephew, Jimmy Wilson;
65 niece, Wanda Moyer; grandchildren, Justin Harris (Dana), Indie
66 Rhoda (Cody), Dylan and Bailey Lalonde; great-grandchildren, JJ,



67 Cole, Harper Harris, Logan Kendrick and Coy Rhoda; his beloved
68 dog, Duke; and

69 WHEREAS, Lecile was the kind of father, grandfather and
70 great-grandfather who took time to teach his kin skills and
71 valuable lessons, to connect and pass along his wisdom and
72 knowledge and will forever be remembered with love by many:

73 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
74 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
75 mourn the loss and commemorate the life and legacy of legendary
76 rodeo clown Lecile Harris and express deepest sympathy to his
77 family and friends upon his passing.

78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
79 furnished to the family of Lecile Harris and to the members of the
80 Capitol Press Corps.

