

By: Representatives Creekmore IV, Lancaster, Reynolds To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 80

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING CHICKASAW COUNTY,
2 MISSISSIPPI, NATIVE, THE LEGENDARY AND RENOWNED SINGER-SONGWRITER
3 MRS. BOBBIE GENTRY FOR HER MUSICAL ARTISTRY AND EXTRAORDINARY
4 TALENT.

5 WHEREAS, "Chickasaw County child, Is gonna be ok, Chickasaw
6 County child, You gonna be somebody someday" sang the Chickasaw
7 County, Mississippi, child who grew up to be somebody, the
8 legendary and renowned singer-songwriter Mrs. Bobbie Gentry; and

9 WHEREAS, Bobbie Gentry, born Roberta Lee Streeter on July 27,
10 1942, on a little farm outside the Village of Woodland in
11 Chickasaw County, is a retired, legendary musical artist who used
12 her talents as a songwriter and singer during her time as one of
13 the first female musicians who wrote, produced and even published
14 her own music; and

15 WHEREAS, she is remembered for her Southern themed narrative
16 songs including her classic recordings "Fancy," a hit for Bobbie
17 in 1969 and later famously covered by Reba McEntire in 1990, and
18 her 1967 debut single "Ode To Billie Joe" which became a U.S.



19 number one hit and a worldwide sensation, and was later adapted
20 into a movie in 1976; and

21 WHEREAS, Mrs. Gentry released seven albums on Capitol
22 Records including her defining works "Patchwork," "The Delta
23 Sweete" and "Ode to Billie Joe," before her self-imposed
24 retirement, and she also had a successful partnership with Glen
25 Campbell with whom she recorded an album of duets; and

26 WHEREAS, her native Mississippi roots are found in many of
27 her most popular songs: "Ode to Billie Joe," "Mississippi Delta,"
28 "Parchman Farm," "Chickasaw County Girl" and "Okolona River
29 Bottom," among others; and

30 WHEREAS, years ahead of her time, Bobbie was also a keen
31 businesswoman: within months of the success of her first single,
32 she established two music publishing companies, organized beneath
33 her parent company, Gentry Ltd., which among other activities
34 produced her live shows; and later, when she was primarily
35 performing, she negotiated her own multi-million dollar contracts;
36 and she was an original co-owner of the Phoenix Suns Basketball
37 Team, helping bring the first major professional sports franchise
38 to the State of Arizona; and

39 WHEREAS, early in her career, despite performing regularly,
40 initially Bobbie's sole ambition was to write songs to sell to
41 other artists, telling *The Washington Post* that she only sang on
42 the recording of "Ode to Billie Joe" she took to Capitol Records
43 because it was cheaper than hiring a professional; and also



44 delivered to Capitol Records was the track "Mississippi Delta,"
45 and it was this recording rather than "Ode to Billie Joe" that
46 initially got her signed; and

47 WHEREAS, the first six years of her career Bobbie was
48 primarily a recording artist, and for the next six she was an
49 entertainer appearing on stages all over the world, but primarily
50 in Las Vegas and Reno; and though she had started playing Las
51 Vegas as early as 1968 when Howard Hughes put her on at Caesar's
52 Palace, it was not until her recording career ended that her stage
53 career really took off; and

54 WHEREAS, one of Bobbie's most talked about live segments in
55 this period was her tribute to Elvis Presley, witnessed one night
56 by the King himself; and by the mid-seventies, she was the
57 undisputed Queen of Las Vegas breaking attendance records at The
58 Landmark and apparently racking up more performances during her
59 stage career than any other lady to play the strip; and

60 WHEREAS, her last production was at the Sahara in Las Vegas
61 during September 1980; but there was no farewell show or
62 announcement of her retirement; and in May 1981, Bobbie was one of
63 many guest stars on the NBC special "An All-Star Salute to
64 Mother's Day" during which she sang just one song: a rendition of
65 the Broadway tune "Mama, A Rainbow," dedicated to her own mother
66 who was in the audience; and

67 WHEREAS, what no one knew at the time was that this would be
68 her last performance; and the following year she made her last



69 public appearance at the Country Music Awards on April 29, 1982,
70 at 40 years old; and since that time, she has not recorded,
71 performed or been interviewed again; and

72 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to celebrate
73 the accomplishments of musical artists from the State of
74 Mississippi who have used their talents to enhance the musical
75 landscape of our lives:

76 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
77 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
78 THEREIN, That we do hereby commend legendary and renowned
79 singer-songwriter Mrs. Bobbie Gentry for bringing the gift of
80 music into the lives of millions, and we extend our sincere wishes
81 for good health and happiness in her lighter years.

82 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
83 furnished to Mrs. Bobbie Gentry and to the members of the Capitol
84 Press Corps.

