

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 16

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of country music legend James Cecil "Little Jimmy" Dickens.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of James Cecil "Little Jimmy" Dickens; and

WHEREAS, a country music legend of matchless fame, he was the oldest living member of the Grand Ole Opry at the time of his passing on January 2 of this year, and he had continued being in the midst of his beloved Grand Ole Opry family members and performing on that hallowed stage several times per week, giving his last performance on December 20, 2014, in celebration of his 94th birthday on the previous day; and

WHEREAS, Little Jimmy Dickens was a consummate musical and entertainment professional who worked assiduously over the entirety of his adult life to promote the country music genre; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dickens became one of the greatest ambassadors of country music because he had heard, loved, and experienced its sounds, rhythms, and lyrics since the time of his birth in the small town of Bolt, West Virginia, on December 19, 1920; he was one of thirteen children born to Louis and Edna Dickens; and

WHEREAS, he was small in stature; he stood only 4'11" in cowboy boots, which garnered him the iconic nickname "Little Jimmy"; however, the rewards of his life's endeavors caused his throngs of comrades and fans to herald him as a giant wherever he went and whatever he did; and

WHEREAS, a child of the Great Depression, Mr. Dickens performed around his community and on local radio stations during his teenage years and while attending the University of West Virginia, which he left early in order to pursue a country music career; and

WHEREAS, at the request of Roy Acuff, Mr. Dickens came to Nashville in February 1948 to sing at the Opry; in August of that same year, he became a permanent member of the Opry family, and the many years since made him the longest-running performer on the longest-running live radio show; and

WHEREAS, in 1964, Mr. Dickens became the first country artist to circle the globe on tour, and his biggest hit song, "May the Bird of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose," was No. 1 on the country charts and reached No. 15 on the pop charts; and

WHEREAS, other great songs for which he will be remembered include "Take an Old Cold Tater (And Wait)," "Hole in My Pocket," "Country Boy," "A-Sleeping at the Foot of the Bed," and "I'm Little But I'm Loud," and in 1983, he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, later in his career, in addition to regular musical performances, Little Jimmy Dickens varied his outlets for exposure of his humor and talents by making appearances in a number of music videos with fellow musician and West Virginian Brad Paisley; made numerous television appearances; and joined with fellow Opry stars George Jones and Bill Anderson to form the incredibly humorous and entertaining Kung-Pao Buckaroos; and

WHEREAS, Little Jimmy Dickens was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, Mona, and he was the proud parent of daughters Pam and spouse John Detert and Lisa and spouse Dennis King; and

WHEREAS, he is also survived by two grandchildren, Amanda Detert and April and spouse Adam Remick; three great-grandchildren, Keylee, Tanner, and Tyler Remick; and three sisters, Edna Allen, Shirley Allen, and Juanita Cox; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dickens leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, because of his renowned musical talent and his exuberance for humor and entertainment, Mr. Dickens marked the annals of country music history in a profoundly beautiful way and is, in large part, directly responsible for the timeless charm and appeal fans hold for the

Grand Ole Opry; he will long be remembered as the smallest giant to grace that hallowed hall;
and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the
bountiful life of this beloved human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of James Cecil "Little Jimmy" Dickens, reflecting
fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life
with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences
to the family of Mr. Dickens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared
for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.