

House Resolution 100

By: Representatives Petrea of the 166th, Hitchens of the 161st, DeLoach of the 167th, Stephens of the 164th, Smith of the 70th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the life and memory of Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished citizens
3 with the passing of Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West on January 17, 2021, which was her 108th
4 birthday; and

5 WHEREAS, Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West was born on January 17, 1913, in Grosse Pointe,
6 Michigan, a beloved daughter of Dr. Henry Torrey and Nell Ford Torrey; and

7 WHEREAS, Sandy became a part-time coastal Georgia resident in 1917, spending winters
8 with her family at Greenwich Plantation near Thunderbolt, Georgia; and

9 WHEREAS, in 1924, her parents purchased Ossabaw Island, Georgia's third largest barrier
10 island, which was inherited by Sandy and her late brother's children in 1959; and

11 WHEREAS, in 1961, she and her husband, Clifford, began the Ossabaw Island Project for
12 established creatives, the first of several innovative interdisciplinary programs that were
13 designed to share Ossabaw Island while also preserving it for future generations; and

14 WHEREAS, in 1970, she launched a program called Genesis, a semi-sustainable
15 back-to-the-land program that she described as "a training ground for environmental
16 awareness"; and

17 WHEREAS, from 1961 to 1983, Sandy used her own funds to host thousands of people on
18 Ossabaw Island through the Ossabaw Island Project, Genesis, and her Research & Public
19 Education program; and

20 WHEREAS, activities under her leadership included ecology, photography, physics,
21 painting, linguistics, archaeology, writing, history, and more, and island guests included
22 Eugene Odum, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, Ralph Ellison, H. W. Janson, Celestine
23 Sibley, Harry Bertoia, Ivan Bailey, Margaret Atwood, Annie Dillard, and Philip Greear; and

24 WHEREAS, at the same time, Sandy was a groundbreaking advocate for the conservation
25 of Georgia's coast, as a convener of the Conference on the Future of the Marshlands and
26 Islands of Georgia, held at Sea Island in October 1968, which led to the passage of the
27 "Coastal Marshlands Protection Act" in 1970; and

28 WHEREAS, facing financial pressure from property taxes, Sandy led her family to negotiate
29 with the State of Georgia for the purchase of Ossabaw Island, designating it as Georgia's first
30 Heritage Preserve under the "Heritage Trust Act of 1975" and guaranteeing that it can never
31 be subdivided, sold, or developed and that it must be used solely for natural, scientific, or
32 cultural education, research, or study; and

33 WHEREAS, in 1978, Sandy and her family officially sold Ossabaw Island to the State of
34 Georgia for half of its appraised value and continued to hold a life estate residency for 23

35 acres and operate programs on Ossabaw Island through an agreement with the State of
36 Georgia, finally moving off the island in 2016; and

37 WHEREAS, a compassionate and generous woman, Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West will long
38 be remembered for her love of family, friendship, and community and will be missed by all
39 who had the great fortune of knowing her.

40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
41 the members of this body join in honoring the life and memory of Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey
42 West and express their deepest and most sincere regret at her passing.

43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
44 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the
45 family of Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West.