

House Resolution 974

By: Representative Ralston of the 7th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Jacob "Jaap" Groen; 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 Jacob "Jaap" Groen on May 29, 2015; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Mr. Groen was born in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1925, and as a young man, he was
5 among the survivors of the Nazi death camps during World War II; and
- 6 WHEREAS, in the days leading up to World War II, he began working for the Dutch
7 underground as a cook and making fake IDs for Jewish citizens; and
- 8 WHEREAS, while working for the Dutch underground, he succeeded in hiding during the
9 early years of Nazi Germany's occupation of Holland with the help of his future wife, Rie
10 Van Voorthuyzen; and
- 11 WHEREAS, in 1941 at the age of 16, a grade school friend who had become a Dutch Nazi
12 turned in Mr. Groen, and he was subsequently arrested and sent to the Auschwitz
13 concentration camp in Poland; and
- 14 WHEREAS, while at Auschwitz, he survived experimentation by the so-called Nazi angel
15 of death, Josef Mengele; in 1944, Mr. Groen was among those who were forced to participate
16 in the infamous death march to the Mauthausen, Austria, concentration camp; and
- 17 WHEREAS, during the final days of World War II, he was sent to the death camp at
18 Ebensee, Austria, to die; however, he survived on tree bark, determination, and grit, barely
19 able to stand but holding onto life as the sound of artillery was heard close by; and

20 WHEREAS, in May, 1945, Mr. Groen and the other survivors in the Ebensee death camp
21 were liberated by American troops and taken to a military hospital, but Mr. Groen was
22 considered too weak to fly for more treatment; and

23 WHEREAS, the next morning, he sneaked out of the hospital and crawled onto a plane that
24 was ready for take-off to Paris; when the crew found him, they tried to send him back to the
25 hospital, but he pleaded to be allowed to fly, which they did; and

26 WHEREAS, Mr. Groen arrived at the Bichat Hospital in Paris at just 64 pounds and was
27 diagnosed with tuberculosis; he was later flown to Holland where he was bedridden for more
28 than a year; and

29 WHEREAS, in 1957, he immigrated to Georgia and began work as a window dresser at
30 Rich's Department Store; soon he found himself working in advertising, later becoming an
31 advertising executive at Citizen Jewelry; and

32 WHEREAS, Mr. Groen went on to become vice president for Ellmans, where he worked
33 until 1985; and

34 WHEREAS, one of his most noted advertising creations was the Homer D. Poe campaign
35 which he and a colleague created for Home Depot; and

36 WHEREAS, Mr. Groen continued to work even through his 80s for individual clients while
37 contributing much of his time to the Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association; and

38 WHEREAS, he was a long-time supporter, volunteer, and lover of the arts and was a great
39 collaborator in many of the association's press releases and marketing efforts; and

40 WHEREAS, Mr. Groen gave inspiration to many through his high ideals, morals, and deep
41 concern for his fellow citizens, and the devotion, patience, and understanding he
42 demonstrated to his family and friends were admired by others; and

43 WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife of 43 years, Patricia; three children, Phillip, Jeff, and
44 Carrie; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren; and

45 WHEREAS, a compassionate and generous man, Mr. Groen will long be remembered for his
46 love of family and friendship, and this loyal gentleman and friend will be missed by all who
47 had the great fortune of knowing him.

48 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
49 the members of this body join in honoring the life and memory of Mr. Jacob "Jaap" Groen
50 and express their deepest and most sincere regret at his passing.

51 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
52 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
53 family of Mr. Jacob "Jaap" Groen.