

Regular Session, 2010

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 11

BY REPRESENTATIVE ANDERS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To recognize Saturday, May 22, 2010, as Will Haney Day in Ferriday.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize Saturday, May 22, 2010, as Will Haney Day in Ferriday in honor of his outstanding contributions to blues music as operator of Haney's Big House; and

WHEREAS, born in Vidalia, Will Haney served with great pride and valor in the United States Army, was stationed in France during World War I, and earned the rank of first sergeant; and

WHEREAS, after returning from military service following World War I, Will Haney sold life and accident insurance as a representative of People's Life Insurance of New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, during the floods of the 1930s and 1940s, many of Mr. Haney's policyholders were unable to work, so Mr. Haney traveled to New Orleans to tell the company that he would not allow his customers' policies to lapse due to the flood; and

WHEREAS, after turning over the insurance business to a relative, Will Haney opened a barbeque joint that had a dirt floor, paneled walls that ran halfway up the building, and a screen that ran above the walls to the ceiling; and

WHEREAS, by the late 1930s, Will Haney constructed a barroom at the same location and called the place Haney's, creating what would eventually become the legendary Haney's Big House; and

WHEREAS, after enlarging his business, the bluesmen of the Mississippi Delta and the jazzmen of New Orleans would often travel to Ferriday to play at Haney's; and

WHEREAS, Will Haney operated the famous nightclub known worldwide as Haney's Big House in Ferriday, Louisiana, during the 1940s and 1950s; and

WHEREAS, Haney's Big House was a part of what is known as the "chitlin circuit", playing host to legends of blues music, including Fats Domino, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, B.B. King, Irma Thomas, and Percy Sledge, among others; and

WHEREAS, blues music is the most influential form of American roots music, and its impact is heard around the world in rock 'n' roll, jazz, rhythm and blues, country, and classic musical; and

WHEREAS, with the success of Haney's Big House, Mr. Haney built a two-story motel called Haney's Motel behind the club to accommodate musicians and patrons; and

WHEREAS, the glory years of Haney's Big House spanned about two decades before a fire destroyed the entire block in 1966, and Haney's property burned to the ground and was never rebuilt; and

WHEREAS, Will Haney was a loving husband to his wife Lillie and a devoted father to his only daughter, Willie, who attended an all-girls college in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Will Haney passed away after becoming ill during the late 1960s, but his legacy lives on forever in the minds and hearts of the people of Ferriday; and

WHEREAS, as an African American man during turbulent times, Will Haney made a place in history for both himself and Ferriday that will never be surpassed; and

WHEREAS, Ferriday recently joined a handful of cities outside Mississippi, including Chicago, Memphis, New Orleans, and London, that were selected to receive a Mississippi Blues Trail marker, and the marker is being placed at the site of Haney's Big House in honor of the legendary blues musicians that played there; and

WHEREAS, May 22, 2010, has been proclaimed Will Haney Day by the town of Ferriday; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the success of Will Haney and Haney's Big House, Ferriday became legendary and continues to stand out in music culture today.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize Saturday, May 22, 2010, as Will Haney Day in Ferriday, does hereby posthumously commend Will Haney for his contributions to blues music as operator of Haney's Big House, and does hereby extend enduring appreciation for the tremendous pride and honor that this wonderful man continues to bring to the citizens of the town of Ferriday and the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Glen B. McGlothin, Jr., mayor of the town of Ferriday.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE