

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2005**  
**RATIFIED BILL**

**RESOLUTION 2005-25**  
**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1113**

A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF JAMES ALLEN "JIM" GRAHAM, FORMER STATE COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE.

Whereas, James Allen "Jim" Graham was born in Rowan County in the Town of Cleveland on April 7, 1921, to James Turner and Laura Blanche Allen Graham; and

Whereas, Jim Graham graduated from Cleveland High School in 1938 and North Carolina State College in 1942 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Education; and

Whereas, Jim Graham married Helen Ida Kirk, on October 30, 1942, and their family later included two daughters, Alice Kirk Graham Underhill and Laura Constance Graham Brooks, and seven grandchildren; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was employed as a teacher of vocational agriculture by the Iredell County Schools from 1942 to 1945; and

Whereas, Jim Graham became Superintendent of the Upper Research Station in 1946 in Laurel Springs, a position he held for six years; and

Whereas, Jim Graham held dual jobs during the period from 1952 to 1957, serving as Manager of the Dixie Classic Fair in Winston-Salem and the first Secretary of the North Carolina Hereford Breeders Association; and

Whereas, Jim Graham became Manager of the Raleigh Farmers Market in 1957 and continued in that position seven years; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture on July 19, 1964, by Governor Terry Sanford to fill the unexpired term of the late L.Y. Ballentine; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was elected Commissioner of Agriculture in November of 1964 and reelected eight times, serving nine four-year terms until his retirement in 2000, when he became the longest serving State Commissioner of Agriculture in the nation; and

Whereas, Jim Graham, at the time of his retirement, had served as Commissioner for more than one-third of the entire existence of the Department since its creation in 1876; and

Whereas, it was in this position of leadership that Jim Graham served North Carolina so ably, directing North Carolina's modest farm economy that depended largely on cash income from tobacco and textiles to a highly diversified agribusiness community with receipts exceeding \$62 billion annually; and

Whereas, much of the success of agriculture during the last half century in North Carolina is due to the persistent leadership of Jim Graham, whose own formula

for success was summarized by a plaque that he proudly kept in his office, "90% Attitude and 10% Ability"; and

Whereas, Jim Graham, during his 58 years in public service served 11 Governors and countless legislators and witnessed an unprecedented growth and prosperity for North Carolina's farm community; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was the recipient of many awards and honors, among them: State 4-H Alumni Award, 1965; National 4-H Alumni Award, 1974; North Carolina Yam Commission Distinguished Service Award; North Carolina Citizens Association Distinguished Service Award, Man of the Year in North Carolina Agriculture, 1969; National Future Farmers of America Distinguished Service Award, 1972; North Carolina Dairy Products Association Distinguished Service Award, 1981; North Carolina Turkey Federal Association, Life Membership for Outstanding Service, 1982; North Carolina Apple Growers Association, Life Membership for Outstanding Service, 1982; North Carolina Cooperative Council Outstanding Service to Rural People Award, 1983; North Carolina Pork Producers Association Special Service Award, 1983; North Carolina Poultry Federation Distinguished Service Award, 1983; North Carolina Quarter Horse Association, Hall of Fame; Martin Litwack Award, North Carolina State University's College of Veterinary Medicine; and North Carolina Pest Control Association Award; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was named "Man of the Year" in January 1979 by Progressive Farmer Magazine; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was chosen as the permanent Class President of the Class of 1942 of North Carolina State University; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was an honorary member of the North Carolina Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association, North Carolina Farm Writers Association, State Future Farmers of America, North Carolina Food Dealers Association, and North Carolina School Food Service Association; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was awarded the Watauga Medal on March 6, 2002, by North Carolina State University's Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty for his many contributions to the University, the State of North Carolina, agriculture, and agribusiness; and

Whereas, Jim Graham received the first Dean's Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award on November 2, 2003, from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University; and

Whereas, among Jim Graham's many achievements was research leading to the eradication of the boll weevil, bovine brucellosis, hog cholera, and pseudorabies in hogs, significant achievements that have led directly to the expansion of cotton and livestock production; and

Whereas, while cotton had reigned as king in North Carolina during the early 1900s, it had declined to an insignificant crop by 1950, due to the boll weevil. With the eradication of the boll weevil during the 1980s, cotton made a dramatic comeback, and by 2000, the State's cotton crop totaled 1.43 million bales, shattering a previous high set in 1926 by 221,000 bales. North Carolina continues today to be free of the boll weevil; and

Whereas, due to the elimination of hog cholera and other animal diseases along with Jim Graham's support of contract farming, the hog inventory increased from just over one million hogs in the early 1940s to over 9.5 million, the greatest expansion occurring since 1991; and

Whereas, during Jim Graham's 36-year tenure as Commissioner of Agriculture, North Carolina farmers saw their cash income increase from \$1 billion to \$8 billion annually; and

Whereas, North Carolina leads the nation today in the production of flue-cured tobacco, sweet potatoes, and turkeys, is second in the nation in the production of hogs and pigs, Christmas trees, cucumbers for pickles, and farm-raised trout, is third in poultry and egg production, is fourth in bell peppers, broilers, peanuts, greenhouse nursery products, and strawberries, and is fifth in blueberries, burley tobacco, catfish, and snap beans; and

Whereas, as Commissioner of Agriculture, Jim Graham earned the respect of his colleagues and peers throughout North Carolina and the nation for his knowledge, his strength of character, and especially for his great sense of personal integrity; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was a person of indefatigable humor, always seeing the best in others, appreciating the true character of the farmer. Once, meeting a farmer with tobacco juice dripping from both sides of his mouth, Jim Graham commented, "There goes a well-balanced man"; and

Whereas, Jim Graham was a longtime and devoted member of the First Baptist Church in Raleigh, having served in many capacities, including deacon; and he was a loyal member of the Kiwanis Club of Raleigh for many years; and

Whereas, Jim Graham died November 20, 2003, at the age of 82, but his legacy continues with his daughters Alice and husband, Dr. T. Reed Underhill, of New Bern, and Connie and husband, Leslie R. Brooks, of Nashville, Tennessee; and grandchildren T. Reed Underhill, Jr., Laura Underhill, Graham Underhill, Berry Brooks, Lauren Brooks, Allen Brooks, and Grace Brooks; and

Whereas, Jim Graham will be remembered by all who knew him as a man who loved his job, was devoted to his family, church, community, State, and public service; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

**SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of James Allen Graham and expresses the appreciation and gratitude of this State and its citizens for his life and service to the people of North Carolina.

**SECTION 2.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the family of James Allen Graham.

**SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2005.

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Beverly E. Perdue  
President of the Senate

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Richard T. Morgan  
Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives