

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION DRSJR75349-LG-267 (6/14)

Sponsors: Senator Dorsett.

Referred to:

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF RAY
2 CHARLES, AN AMERICAN LEGEND.

3 Whereas, Ray Charles Robinson was born on September 30, 1930, to Baily
4 Robinson and Aretha Robinson, in Albany, Georgia; and

5 Whereas, Ray Charles moved at the age of three months with his family to
6 Greenville, Florida; and

7 Whereas, at the age of five, Ray Charles started to go blind as a result of
8 glaucoma. He lost his sight completely within two years and was placed in the Florida
9 School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, where he learned to read Braille, to play
10 the piano and clarinet, and to memorize music. He discovered mathematics and its
11 correlation to music and learned to compose and arrange music in his head; and

12 Whereas, at the age of 15, Ray Charles began performing with the "Traveling
13 Hillbilly Bands" and rhythm and blues combinations throughout the South as pianist,
14 clarinetist, and saxophonist. He taught himself to arrange and compose music, both in
15 Braille and by singing the parts to another musician who would write them down; and

16 Whereas, in 1947, Ray Charles moved to Seattle, Washington, and soon
17 formed a band that imitated the style of Nat "King" Cole and Charles Brown; and

18 Whereas, Ray Charles recorded a number of singles on the Downbeat and
19 Swingtime labels before signing with Atlantic Records in 1952 and later with
20 ABC-Paramount Record in 1959; and

21 Whereas, in 1961, Ray Charles made history in Memphis, Tennessee, when
22 for the first time an integrated audience attended his performance at the municipally
23 owned and operated city auditorium. In 1964, he completed an around-the-world tour
24 that included 90 concerts in nine weeks and played to some 500,000 spectators from
25 Japan to Algeria. As an internationally know performer, he has appeared on stages
26 ranging from Carnegie Hall to the Grand Ole Opry and performed concerts in numerous
27 countries throughout the world; and

1 Whereas, Ray Charles found success with his unique sound of music, which
2 merged blues, gospel, country, jazz, and big band music together; and

3 Whereas, Ray Charles was described as a musical genius and was often
4 credited with pioneering soul music; and

5 Whereas, during his career, Ray Charles had number one hits on the R & B,
6 Pop, and Country music charts, showing that his music had no boundaries; and

7 Whereas, Ray Charles enriched our lives with such hits as "I Got A Woman",
8 "Drown in My Own Tears", "The Night Time Is the Right Time", "What'd I Say"; and

9 Whereas, in 1979, Ray Charles' rendition of "Georgia On My Mind" was
10 named the official state song of Georgia; and

11 Whereas, Ray Charles won 12 Grammy awards from 1960 to 1993; and

12 Whereas, in another aspect of his career, Ray Charles has to his credit such
13 films as "The Blues Brothers" and a variety of television appearances, including
14 "Country Comes Home", "Ray Charles – A Man and His Soul", "A 40th Anniversary
15 Celebration", and "A Tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. – A Celebration of His Life";
16 and

17 Whereas, in 1980, Ray Charles recorded soundtracks for "The Cincinnati
18 Kid" in 1965 and "In the Heat of the Night" in 1967, and performed in television
19 commercials for Pepsi during the 1990s; and

20 Whereas, among his numerous honors and awards, Ray Charles was the
21 recipient of the National Medal of Arts and was inducted into nine halls of fame,
22 including the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Rhythm and Blues Hall of Fame; and

23 Whereas, Ray Charles was the recipient of many honorary degrees, and in
24 2000 received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Shaw University in
25 Raleigh; and

26 Whereas, Ray Charles inspired countless musicians and listeners from all
27 over the world with his music and joyous spirit; and

28 Whereas, Ray Charles died on June 10, 2004, at the age of 73, leaving a
29 lasting legacy for generations to come; Now, therefore,
30 Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

31 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Ray Charles and
32 expresses its appreciation for the life and accomplishments of this great American and
33 for the lasting legacy of his music.

34 **SECTION 2.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.