

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003
RATIFIED BILL

RESOLUTION 2004-11
SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1441

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whereas, Ray Charles died on June 10, 2004, at the age of 73, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come; Now, therefore,

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

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

SECTION 2. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 9th day of July, 2004.

Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives