

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003**

S

2

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 608
Rules and Operations of the Senate Committee Substitute Adopted 6/25/03**

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 31, 2003

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF TIMOTHY
2 REESE MCLAURIN.

3 Whereas, today we honor Timothy Reese McLaurin, whose seven books of
4 fiction, memoir, and poetry traced the soul of North Carolina in rare and wondrous
5 language. He framed its fields and towns, ponds and woods and rivers, and he captured
6 its people, the plain but never ordinary, rough-hewn, down-home, heroic folk who
7 nurtured and fought and fled and loved each other and the land.

8 All this he did, according to his own prodigious imagination and craft, as a
9 son of North Carolina who traveled widely in the world and deeply at home, but whose
10 every hour was fed, even in his remotest sojourns, by the soil that made him who he
11 was. Clearly he loved everything about North Carolina – the flat fields and woods east
12 of Fayetteville and the forested hills west of Chapel Hill, and all the places in between.

13 We honor a man who grew up in small town North Carolina, worked in
14 tobacco fields and played on his high school basketball team, traveled with his snakes in
15 a carnival, served in both the Peace Corps and the Marine Corps, and graduated from
16 the University of North Carolina with a degree in journalism and a fiery passion for
17 words and story making.

18 We honor a man who joined the creative writing faculty of North Carolina
19 State University in 1989 and who from that time became a powerful presence in the
20 lives of hundreds of students.

21 The things that Tim McLaurin most honored by his living were his family, his
22 craft, his legion of friends, the land that he held a sacred trust, and the young people
23 who, turning to him for instruction, received rigorous honesty, great good humor, and
24 inspiration as well. We in turn honor a man who fought tirelessly for what he believed
25 in and in his last years, with grace and eloquence, fought against the disease of cancer.

26 To mark this battle he wore, on his chest, a tattoo of a Phoenix, a symbol that
27 today recalls to us the stern beauty of his life and his written legacy. We can do no
28 better than to let our last words of honor come from his pen, as he tells us:

29 "We are sons and daughters of the land, our heritage tied to fields and woods,
30 the call of hunt, the spiritual transition of the seed that cracks the hard earth and grows

1 into weed, food, flower, or tree. I have carried in my wallet for seven years a plastic
2 sandwich bag filled with plain dirt scooped from the pasture behind the homeplace. It
3 has traveled with me through Africa, Europe, and much of America, a talisman that
4 whispers to me the song of mourning doves, wind in the longleaf pines, the low rumble
5 of thunder from a summer storm that has recently passed and soaked the dry fields. I
6 hope to waltz slowly to that tune the day I lift above this bright land;". Now, therefore,
7 Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

8 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Timothy Reese
9 McLaurin and expresses the appreciation of this State and its citizens for his life and
10 accomplishments.

11 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly extends its deepest sympathy to the
12 family of Timothy Reese McLaurin for the loss of a beloved family member.

13 **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
14 resolution to the family of Timothy Reese McLaurin.

15 **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.