

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2013

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SENATE RESOLUTION DRSR75100-LG-4B (11/14)

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Sponsors: Senators Soucek and Nesbitt (Primary Sponsors).

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Referred to:

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1 A SENATE RESOLUTION HONORING THE MEMORY OF RUTH BELL GRAHAM AND  
2 NAMING BILLY GRAHAM NORTH CAROLINA'S FAVORITE SON.

3 Whereas, Billy Graham was born William Franklin Graham, Jr. on November 7,  
4 1918, to William Franklin Graham and Morrow Coffey Graham and was reared on a dairy farm  
5 in Charlotte; and

6 Whereas, Ruth McCue Bell was born on June 10, 1920, to Dr. and Mrs. Nelson Bell  
7 in Qingjiang, Kiangsu, China, where her parents were serving as medical missionaries at the  
8 Presbyterian Hospital; and

9 Whereas, Billy Graham attended the Florida Bible Institute from 1937 to 1940,  
10 graduating in 1940, and was ordained to the ministry in 1939 by a church in the Southern  
11 Baptist Convention; and

12 Whereas, Billy Graham and Ruth McCue Bell met while attending Wheaton College  
13 in Illinois and were married shortly after their graduation on August 13, 1943; and

14 Whereas, after a few years, Billy and Ruth Graham moved to Montreat, North  
15 Carolina, where they raised five children, Virginia, Anne, Ruth, Franklin, and Nelson; and

16 Whereas, Billy Graham served as pastor of The Village Church in Western Springs,  
17 Illinois, from 1943 to 1945; as a member of Youth for Christ International, where he ministered  
18 to young people and military personnel from 1945 to 1950; and as President of Northwestern  
19 Schools, a liberal arts college, Bible school, and theological seminary, from 1947 to 1952; and

20 Whereas, after World War II, Billy Graham preached throughout the United States  
21 and Europe and attained international prominence as an evangelist through a series of crusades  
22 that began in 1949; and

23 Whereas, since 1950, Billy Graham has conducted his ministry through the Billy  
24 Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), reaching multitudes of people by means of a  
25 weekly radio program, "Hour of Decision"; a newspaper column, "My Answer"; televised  
26 crusades; articles published in "Decision" magazine; and evangelistic films produced and  
27 distributed by World Wide Pictures and now reaching millions through the BGEA Web site and  
28 the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte; and

29 Whereas, over the years, Billy Graham has preached to live audiences of nearly 215  
30 million people in more than 185 countries and territories and has preached to an estimated 2.2  
31 billion people through television and technology; and

32 Whereas, a renowned humanitarian and philanthropist, Billy Graham has tried to  
33 help those in need through his work with the World Emergency Relief Fund, which gives  
34 financial assistance to disaster victims, and the "Love in Action" committees, which collected  
35 and distributed food and clothing in BGEA crusade cities; and



1           Whereas, Billy Graham has received numerous awards and honorary degrees,  
2 including the North Carolina Award for Public Service in 1986 and the Presidential Medal of  
3 Freedom in 1983; and Honorary Knighthood (KBE) from Her Majesty the Queen of England in  
4 2001 for his international contribution to civic and religious life over 60 years; and

5           Whereas, Billy and Ruth Graham were both awarded the Congressional Gold Medal  
6 for "outstanding and lasting contributions to morality, racial equality, family, philanthropy, and  
7 religion" in 1996; and

8           Whereas, Billy Graham received the Big Brother of the Year Award in 1966 for his  
9 work on behalf of the welfare of children and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation  
10 Freedom Award in 2000 for monumental and lasting contributions to the cause of freedom; and

11           Whereas, Billy Graham has opposed racial discrimination and, in the 1950s and  
12 1960s, never held a segregated meeting but conducted fully integrated crusades; and

13           Whereas, Billy Graham was cited by the George Washington Carver Memorial  
14 Institute for his contributions to race relations in 1964 and was recognized by the  
15 Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith in 1969 and the National Conference of Christians  
16 and Jews in 1971 for his efforts to foster a better understanding among all faiths; and

17           Whereas, Billy Graham has counseled 12 Presidents beginning with President Harry  
18 S. Truman through President Barack Obama and has participated in nine Presidential  
19 inaugurations, more than any man of American history; and

20           Whereas, Billy Graham has been referred to as the "Pastor of Presidents"; and

21           Whereas, Billy Graham has also counseled world leaders and has participated in  
22 many historic occasions; and

23           Whereas, Billy Graham has been called upon as the "nation's pastor" during times of  
24 national crisis. He spoke at the National Cathedral service in Washington, DC, three days after  
25 the 9/11 attack in 2001, as the nation and world watched and listened. Five Presidents,  
26 including George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George H. Bush, Jimmy Carter, and Gerald Ford, and  
27 their wives were in the audience; and

28           Whereas, Billy Graham has written more than 31 books, all of which have become  
29 best sellers, including his books, "Just As I Am," an autobiography published in 1997 and  
30 "Nearing Home" published in 2011; and

31           Whereas, Ruth Graham was also an author, writing or cowriting over 14 books,  
32 including "Sitting by My Laughing Fire," "Legacy of a Pack Rat," and "Prodigals and Those  
33 Who Love Them"; and

34           Whereas, Ruth Graham helped to establish the Ruth and Billy Graham Children's  
35 Health Center in Asheville; and

36           Whereas, on June 14, 2007, Billy Graham lost his partner and closest confidant,  
37 Ruth Bell Graham, who died at the age of 87; and

38           Whereas, in 2012, Billy Graham was listed on "The Ten Most Admired Men in the  
39 World" for the 56th time. He was first selected in 1955. According to the latest List, Reverend  
40 Graham was tied as Number 3 with Mitt Romney, George W. Bush, and Pope Benedict XVI  
41 behind President Barack Obama and Nelson Mandela; and

42           Whereas, admired and beloved by both Christians and non-Christians, Billy Graham  
43 continues to inspire the world with his good works; and

44           Whereas, there have been many great North Carolinians, but few have impacted the  
45 world more than Billy Graham; and

46           Whereas, Billy Graham, having served our State and country as a faithful and  
47 fearless soldier of the cross, having carried the Gospel of Christ for more than 70 years  
48 throughout the world, is proud to call himself a Tar Heel and to make North Carolina his home;  
49 Now, therefore,

50 Be it resolved by the Senate:

1           **SECTION 1.** The Senate honors the memory of Ruth Bell Graham, who made  
2 significant contributions to our State and nation through her partnership with her husband in  
3 marriage and ministry.

4           **SECTION 2.** The Senate honors and names Billy Graham as North Carolina's  
5 Favorite Son.

6           **SECTION 3.** The Senate requests the Governor to set a day to recognize and honor  
7 Billy Graham as North Carolina's Favorite Son.

8           **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.