

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013**

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**SENATE RESOLUTION 196
Education/Higher Education Committee Substitute Adopted 4/10/13**

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 6, 2013

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

36 Whereas, Billy Graham has received numerous awards and honorary degrees,
37 including the North Carolina Award for Public Service in 1986 and the Presidential Medal of



1 Freedom in 1983; and Honorary Knighthood (KBE) from Her Majesty the Queen of England in
2 2001 for his international contribution to civic and religious life over 60 years; and

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

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

9 Whereas, Billy Graham has opposed racial discrimination and, in the 1950s and
10 1960s, never held a segregated meeting but conducted fully integrated Crusades; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

34 Whereas, on June 14, 2007, Billy Graham lost his partner and closest confidante,
35 Ruth Bell Graham, who died at the age of 87; and

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

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

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

44 Whereas, Billy Graham, having served in all the aforementioned ways for more than
45 70 years in our State, our country, and throughout the world, is proud to call himself a Tar Heel
46 and to make North Carolina his home; Now, therefore,

47 Be it resolved by the Senate:

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

- 1 **SECTION 2.** The Senate honors and names Billy Graham as North Carolina's
2 Favorite Son.
3 **SECTION 3.** The Senate requests the Governor to set a day to recognize and honor
4 Billy Graham as North Carolina's Favorite Son.
5 **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.