

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1425

Sponsors: Representatives Fisher; and Harrison.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

April 12, 2007

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF WILMA
2 DYKEMAN, ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO
3 APPALACHIAN LITERATURE.

4 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman was born on May 20, 1920, to Willard Dykeman
5 and Bonnie Cole Dykeman and grew up in the Beaverdam community of Buncombe
6 County; and

7 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman attended Biltmore Junior College and graduated
8 from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where she received a BA degree in
9 speech in 1940; and

10 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman married James R. Stokely, Jr., a poet and orchard
11 grower from Newport, Tennessee, a few months after graduating from college; and

12 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman and her husband raised two sons and spent their
13 time between homes in Asheville and Newport; and

14 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman had a career as an author, journalist, lecturer,
15 educator, and historian; and

16 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman wrote 18 books and countless articles and essays,
17 many of which reflected her passion for the Appalachian culture, conservation, social
18 equality, and feminism; and

19 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman's first book, "The French Broad," published in
20 1955 as part of the "Rivers of America Series," explored cultural heritage and water
21 conservation; and

22 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman cowrote three books with her husband, including
23 "Neither Black Nor White," a 1957 publication that examined race relations in the South
24 and, won the Sidney Hillman Award for the best book of the year on world peace, race
25 relations, or civil liberties; and

26 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman's other works included "Tall Woman," "Return
27 the Innocent Earth," and "The Far Family;" and

28 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman wrote biographies of Will Alexander, Edna
29 Rankin McKinnon, and W.D. Waterford and columns for many newspapers and

1 magazines, including the Knoxville News-Sentinel, New York Times magazine, US
2 News and World Report, and Reader's Digest; and

3 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman was affectionately known as the "First Lady of
4 Appalachian Literature;" and

5 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman taught for a number of years in the English
6 Departments of Berea College in Kentucky and the University of Tennessee; and

7 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman enjoyed public speaking and gave as many as 75
8 lectures a year; and

9 Whereas, due to her extensive knowledge of Tennessee, Wilma Dykeman
10 was appointed as Tennessee's State Historian in 1980 and served in that position for
11 four years; and

12 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman received many accolades and awards over the
13 years, receiving the Guggenheim Fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities
14 Senior Fellowship, Chicago Friends of American Writers Award, North Carolina Gold
15 Medal for Contribution to American Letters, Tennessee Outstanding Speaker of the
16 Year by State Association of Speech Arts Teachers and Professions, and the
17 Distinguished Service Award from the University of North Carolina at Asheville; and

18 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman was awarded the Thomas Wolfe Memorial
19 Trophy, an honorary doctorate from Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee, the
20 North Carolina Award for Literature, the John Tyler Caldwell Award for the
21 Humanities from the North Carolina Humanities Council, and the Zebulon B. Vance
22 Award from Brevard College; and she was inducted into the North Carolina Literary
23 Hall of Fame; and

24 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman found time to serve on the Board of Trustees of
25 Berea College, the UNC Advisory Board, and the Great Smoky Mountains Advisory
26 Board, and was a member of the Southern Historical Association; and

27 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman died on December 22, 2006, at the age of 86; and

28 Whereas, Wilma Dykeman is survived by her sons, Dykeman Stokely and
29 James R. Stokely, and two grandchildren; Now, therefore,
30 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

31 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Wilma
32 Dykeman and expresses the appreciation of this State and its citizens for her life and her
33 contributions to literature.

34 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly extends its sincere sympathy to the
35 family of Wilma Dykeman for the loss of a beloved family member.

36 **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
37 resolution to the family of Wilma Dykeman.

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