

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1171

Sponsors: Senator Snow.

Referred to: Calendar 5/2/05.

April 28, 2005

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF WILLIAM
2 HOLLAND THOMAS, FORMER MEMBER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
3 ON THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH.

4 Whereas, William Holland Thomas was born on February 5, 1805, in
5 Haywood County; and

6 Whereas, William Holland Thomas was the son of Richard Thomas, a
7 Revolutionary War veteran, who died before he was born, and Temperance Calvert
8 Thomas; and

9 Whereas, as a young boy, William Holland Thomas befriended members of
10 the local Oconaluftee Indians or Qualla Clan, which later became the Eastern Band of
11 Cherokee Indians; and

12 Whereas, as a teenager, William Holland Thomas began working at a local
13 trading post near his home, during which time he learned the Cherokee language and
14 customs; and

15 Whereas, William Holland Thomas developed a mutual friendship with Chief
16 Yonaguska and was later adopted by the Chief as a member of the Eastern Band of
17 Cherokee Indians; and

18 Whereas, at the age of 15, William Holland Thomas became an attorney after
19 studying from a set of law books that was given to him while he was working at the
20 trading post; and

21 Whereas, as an adult, William Holland Thomas was an influential man in his
22 community and the Western portion of the State; and

23 Whereas, in addition to practicing law, William Holland Thomas was also a
24 businessman, building stores, turnpikes, and railroads; and

25 Whereas, during the 1830s, William Holland Thomas served as an agent for
26 the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, traveling to Washington, DC, to persuade the
27 federal government to allow them to remain in North Carolina and to defend their
28 claims for financial payments promised them; and

1 Whereas, William Holland Thomas was successful in helping the Eastern
2 Bank of Cherokee Indians win the right to be treated as citizens of North Carolina, to
3 govern themselves in their own communities, and to become landowners; and

4 Whereas, upon the death of Chief Yonaguska in 1839, William Holland
5 Thomas was named Chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, a title he held for
6 28 years; and

7 Whereas, prior to his death, William Holland Thomas recounted his life with
8 the Cherokees to a Smithsonian Institute ethnologist, James Mooney, which greatly
9 contributed to the preservation of the history and culture of the Eastern Band of
10 Cherokee Indians; and

11 Whereas, William Holland Thomas served as a State senator from 1848 to
12 1861; and

13 Whereas, during the Civil War, William Holland Thomas served as Colonel
14 of a unit known as Thomas' Legion, which consisted of several regiments, including two
15 composed of Cherokee Indians; and

16 Whereas, William Holland Thomas was married to Sarah Love and together
17 they had three children, William H. Thomas, Jr., James Robert Thomas, and Sallie Love
18 Thomas; and

19 Whereas, after a number of years of declining health and hospital
20 confinement, William Holland Thomas died on May 10, 1893; and

21 Whereas, to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of William Holland
22 Thomas, the Cashiers Historical Society will hold a symposium, entitled "The Life and
23 Times of William Holland Thomas" on May 5, 6, and 7, 2005; Now, therefore,
24 Be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

25 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the life and memory of William
26 Holland Thomas and acknowledges his service to the State and the Eastern Band of
27 Cherokee Indians.

28 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly encourages the citizens of this State to
29 join the Cashiers Historical Society in celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of
30 William Holland Thomas.

31 **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
32 resolution to the Cashiers Historical Society.

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