

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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HOUSE RESOLUTION 210
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/24/13

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 5, 2013

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION HONORING ARTHEL LANE "DOC" WATSON, LEGENDARY
2 SINGER AND MUSICIAN.

3 Whereas, Arthel Lane "Doc" Watson, the sixth of nine children, was born in the
4 Stoney Fork Township near Deep Gap, North Carolina, on March 3, 1923, to General Dixon
5 Watson and Annie Greene Watson; and

6 Whereas, a childhood illness left Arthel Watson visually impaired by the age of two;
7 and

8 Whereas, Arthel Watson developed a love for music at an early age; by age five, he
9 had learned to play the harmonica, and by age 11, he had learned to play a homemade banjo;
10 and

11 Whereas, Arthel Watson began playing the guitar while attending the Governor
12 Morehead School for the Blind in Raleigh, and soon afterward he and his brother, Linney,
13 began playing traditional music around Western North Carolina; and

14 Whereas, at the age of 18, Arthel Watson joined a band that had a regular radio
15 program in the Town of Lenoir, and for the next six years they played throughout North
16 Carolina; and

17 Whereas, during this time, Arthel Watson got his nickname from a radio announcer,
18 who heard an audience member shout, "Call him Doc"; and

19 Whereas, Doc Watson played and sang a large variety of folk and country music
20 songs he learned from family members, neighbors, records, and radio; and

21 Whereas, in 1947, Doc Watson married Rosa Lee Carlton, the daughter of fiddler
22 Gaither W. Carlton, and they were married for more than 66 years; and

23 Whereas, early in his marriage, Doc Watson worked as a piano tuner to support his
24 family; and

25 Whereas, in 1953, Doc Watson began playing the electric guitar with Jack Williams'
26 country and western swing band and developed his trademark acoustic flatpicking style; and

27 Whereas, in 1961, Doc Watson joined the Clarence "Tom" Ashley String Band and
28 switched to acoustic guitar. That same year, he made his recording debut on Clarence Ashley's
29 "Old Time Music at Clarence Ashley's"; and

30 Whereas, during the 1960s, a revival in folk music began, and Doc Watson's
31 popularity increased with the help of Ralph Rinzler; and

32 Whereas, in 1963, Doc Watson performed at the Newport Folk Festival; and

33 Whereas, in 1964, Doc Watson performed at a concert with Bill Monroe, considered
34 to be the father of bluegrass, at Town Hall in New York City and released his first solo album,
35 "Doc Watson"; and

36 Whereas, during that same year, Doc Watson began performing and recording with
37 his son, Merle Watson, who accompanied his father on guitar, making 20 albums and winning
38 four Grammys together; and



1 Whereas, in 1972, Doc Watson sang and played guitar on the Nitty Gritty Dirt
2 Band's album, "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," along with other country and bluegrass stars,
3 including Mother Maybelle Carter, Merle Travis, Roy Acuff, Earl Scruggs, and Jimmy Martin;
4 and

5 Whereas, in 1988, Doc Watson began hosting Merlefest, an annual festival held on
6 the campus of Wilkes Community College as a fundraiser and memorial to his son, Merle, who
7 died in 1985; and

8 Whereas, Doc Watson made over 50 recordings and received numerous honors over
9 the years, including seven Grammy Awards in the categories of Best Ethnic or Traditional
10 Recording in 1973 and 1974, Best Country Instrumental Performance in 1979, Best Traditional
11 Folk Recording in 1987, 1991, and 2002, and Best Country Instrumental Performance in 2006;
12 and

13 Whereas, Doc Watson was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the
14 National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences during the organization's Grammy Awards
15 show in 2004; and

16 Whereas, Doc Watson was inducted into the International Bluegrass Music
17 Association Hall of Honor in 2000 and the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2006 and received the
18 National Medal of Arts in 1997, the National Heritage Fellowship from the National
19 Endowment for the Arts in 1988, and several honorary degrees, including Wilkes Community
20 College's first honorary Associate in Arts degree in 2005; and

21 Whereas, in 2011, Doc Watson was honored by the Town of Boone with a life-size
22 statue that was inscribed, "Just one of the people"; and

23 Whereas, Doc Watson died on May 29, 2012, at the age of 89; and

24 Whereas, Doc Watson is survived by his daughter, Nancy Ellen; several
25 grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and his brothers, David Watson and Linney Watson;
26 and

27 Whereas, Doc Watson has enriched our culture with his unique mix of traditional
28 Appalachian folk music, blues, country, gospel, and bluegrass, and his flatpicking style has
29 influenced generations of guitarists; Now, therefore,
30 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

31 **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives honors the memory of Arthel Lane
32 "Doc" Watson and recognizes the life and accomplishments of this native son for the lasting
33 legacy of his music.

34 **SECTION 2.** The House of Representatives extends its deepest sympathy to the
35 family of Arthel Lane "Doc" Watson for the loss of a beloved family member.

36 **SECTION 3.** The Principal Clerk shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution
37 to the family of Arthel Lane "Doc" Watson.

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