STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 48th Legislature (2001)

SENATE
RESOLUTION 18 By: Horner

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution declaring June 13, 2001, "Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame Day" in the State of Oklahoma; honoring the inductees; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, the Tulsa-based Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame has named nine people vital to the Oklahoma and national music scene to be honored at the organization's Induction Banquet Gala on the evening of Wednesday, June 13, 2001, at the Greenwood Cultural Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, the winner of the Jay McShann Lifetime Achievement Award of the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, Lou Donaldson, was born in Badin, North Carolina, on November 1, 1926. He graduated from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University with a degree in political science and played in Navy bands during World War II. After his military service, he moved to New York City and began recording with Thelonious Monk and Milt Jackson. In 1952, he began making records under his own name, although he worked with Art Blakey in the Jazz Messengers and with Charles Mingus before leading his own groups. A Charlie Parker-inspired Alto saxophonist, Lou Donaldson had a leading role in the soul jazz movement, using an organist in place of a pianist in his groups. North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University now awards a Lou Donaldson Scholarship for Music Excellence. In 1975, Lou Donaldson was awarded the Charlie "Bird" Parker Memorial Medal for his contributions to jazz music; and

WHEREAS, Maxine Cissel-Horner Spirit of Community Excellence Award winner Betty Price has a passion for art and music. Educated in Muskogee, Oklahoma, public schools and Northeastern State University, she taught music in public schools and gave private piano instruction. In 1974, she began her career in public service as Public Information Director of the Oklahoma Arts Council and by 1983 had advanced to the position of Executive Director. In that position she became one of the prime movers in the establishment of the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame. Betty Price also directed the production of several historic photo exhibits including "Greenwood: From Ruins to Renaissance" and "All That Southwest Jazz"; and

WHEREAS, Sonny Gray played piano and keyboard for Bob Hope, Sammy Davis, Jr., Frankie Laine, Benny Goodman, Carol Lawrence, Tiny Tim, Clark Terry, and Marilyn Maye. The owner of the Rubiot, the storied nightclub and center of jazz in Tulsa and northeastern Oklahoma in the 1960's, Sonny Gray also played there with his own jazz quartet. He taught jazz at Central High School in Tulsa, served as an instructor for the Jazz Lab of the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, taught at Tulsa Community College, and offers private music lessons. The Sonny Gray trio continues to play today; and

WHEREAS, Tulsa natives Charles and Barbara Burton graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Tulsa and have been playing together for 30 years as members of the Burton Band. Charles Burton, Principal of Gatewood Elementary School in Oklahoma City, began playing professionally at the age of 15. This lead guitarist and vocalist performed with Gladys Knight and the Pips and on the Tom Jones Show. Barbara Burton, a physics and biology teacher at Douglass High School in Oklahoma City, is also a jazz singer who was recognized at the 15th Annual Grammy Awards and opened for Vic Damone. The Burton Band, including son Trey, an accomplished drummer, is an entertainment fixture in the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, area and much of the state; and

WHEREAS, Claude "Fiddler" Williams, recognized as the “inventor” of the jazz violin, was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, in 1908. By the age of ten he was playing guitar, mandolin, banjo, and cello. He heard Joe Venutis play violin at an outdoor pavilion and convinced his family to buy him his first fiddle the next day. By the time he went to bed that night, he was playing "You've Got to See Mamma Ev'ry Night." He began work playing in the string band of his brother-in-law Ben Johnson and later with The Pettiford Family Band with Oscar Pettiford. Moving to Kansas City in 1928, Claude Williams made his first recording, for the Brunswick label, with Andy Kirk's Twelve Clouds of Joy. Claude Williams played with the Eddie Cole Chicago-based band which featured Eddie's brother, Nat "King" Cole. He left the Eddie Code Band to join Count Basie's Orchestra as its first guitar player. Williams was subsequently voted "Best Guitarist of the Year" in a Downbeat magazine national reader's poll. In the 1940's, Claude Williams played the fiddle with the Four Shades of Rhythm in Chicago and hasn't stopped since. Still very active in his 90's, Claude Williams will be officially inducted into the Jazz Hall of Fame to formalize his first recognition by the Jazz Hall of Fame in 1989, when there were no induction ceremonies; and

WHEREAS, rhythm and blues guitarist great Wayne Bennett grew up in Oklahoma before joining the Amos Milburn Band in 1950. After serving in the U.S. Army, he recorded extensively with Jimmy Reed, Buddy Guy, Otis Rush, and Magic Slim. However, it wasn't until he joined the Blues Consolidated Revue in Chicago that he began to make his mark, playing with Bobby "Blue" Bland and Junior Parker. Bennett had a decades-long musical partnership with Bobby Bland, sometimes touring for years. During the 1960's he studied music theory and became a music teacher. At one time Wayne Bennett joined the Five Blind Boys of Mississippi and worked with The Platters; and

WHEREAS, Tulsa native Rockin' John Henry has had a radio career that began in 1966. John Henry is best known for his Tulsa station KMOD "Smokehouse Blues" show that he originated in 1987 and which won him an induction into the "nonperforming" category. Nonetheless, John Henry has been a guitar player since 1960 and has recorded three albums with his band, The Bobcats. He has also performed with such stars as Bo Diddley, Roy Orbison, The Drifters, The Coasters, The Sherelles, Freddy Cannon, Fabian, The Dixie Cups, and the Blasters; and

WHEREAS, Glenn Edward Burleigh, a Guthrie, Oklahoma, native, is famous as a pianist, composer, and conductor. He began as a Sunday School pianist and children's choir director at the age of eleven. He subsequently studied piano at the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma City University. Having grown up in a family of ministers in Oklahoma, it is no surprise that he has held "Minister of Music" posts in Oklahoma, Nebraska, and Texas. Glenn Burleigh served as Director of Music for the National Baptist Congress for five years. He presently serves as Composer-in-Residence for the Ambassadors' Concert Choir of Oklahoma City as well as being assigned to the staff of the Graceway Church in Oklahoma City as Traveling Music Evangelist. Mr. Burleigh is the founder of the Glenn Burleigh Music Workshop and Ministry, Inc., an organization dedicated to teaching and performing music at all academic levels and focusing on the links between various musical styles. Mr. Burleigh's works are often a fusion of classical, gospel, and jazz. A large number of his works are on file at the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago and the American Music Center in New York.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 48TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate declares Wednesday, June 13, 2001, "Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame Day" in the State of Oklahoma.

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate honors the inductees into the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame; Lou Donaldson; Betty Price; Sonny Gray; Charles and Barbara Burton; Claude "Fiddler" Williams; Wayne Bennett; Rockin' John Henry; and Glenn Edward Burleigh.

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