

ENROLLED SENATE
RESOLUTION NO. 21

By: Leftwich

A Resolution honoring Charles E. Taylor as "The Father of Aviation Maintenance" and recognizing "The Man Aviation History Almost Forgot"; designating May 24, 2003, "Aircraft Maintenance Technicians Day" in the State of Oklahoma; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, Charles Edward Taylor was born in a log cabin on the banks of the Sangamon River in Illinois on May 24, 1868. Quitting school at the age of 12, Charles went to work at a bindery where he became an expert with tools. In 1896 he opened his own tool shop in Dayton, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, in 1901, the Wright Brothers convinced him to work for them in their bicycle shop. After an unsuccessful flight in a glider near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, Charles Taylor built the Wright Brothers a wind tunnel where various design problems could be solved; and

WHEREAS, Charles E. Taylor built a dependable four-cylinder, twelve-horsepower engine for the Wright Brothers' plane. He also made all the metal parts for the airplane. The engine and highly ingenious test equipment Charles Taylor so carefully built for the Wrights were significant factors in making possible man's first successful powered flight; and

WHEREAS, after the first successful flight, the Wrights asked Charles Taylor to build a more powerful engine. The Wright Brothers received permission to test their plane in a field called Huffman Prairie, near Dayton, Ohio, provided they didn't kill any cows. Working most of the time at Huffman Prairie, Charles Taylor became the world's first aviation maintainer and airport manager. When the Wrights began airplane production, Taylor was placed in charge of engine manufacture. He continued to assist the Wrights, going with Wilburn to the Hudson-Fulton Exposition in New York in 1910 and with Orville to Montgomery, Alabama, to establish a flying school; and

WHEREAS, Charles E. Taylor worked in Dayton until 1928 when he moved to California, where he worked in the tool room of North American Aviation. No one knew who he was. In 1937, he returned to Greenfield Village to restore the Wrights' bicycle shop and home and to build a replica of the first engine. He returned to California and worked making cartridge shells. Charles E. Taylor retired at age 77 and died at age 88 on January 30, 1956. He was buried in the Portal of Folded Wings Mausoleum dedicated to aviation pioneers, located in Valhalla Memorial Park, Los Angeles, California; and

WHEREAS, Charles E. Taylor never sought notoriety for his work with the Wright Brothers nor did anyone ever recognize his contributions. He was never in touch with important aviation personages nor was he ever invited to attend any of the big celebrations held in honor of the Wright Brothers. It seems that if anyone had ever thought much about him, they hadn't taken the time to find him; and

WHEREAS, the Charles Taylor "Master Mechanic" award recognizes aviation maintenance personnel who have at least 50 years of experience in the aviation industry. The Charles E. Taylor Memorial will have its groundbreaking on the campus of Wright State University on May 24, 2003, which is Charles Taylor's birthday and a hundred years after he made powered flight a reality. More than half the states have designated May 24 as "Aircraft Maintenance Technicians Day".

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 49TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate honors Charles E. Taylor as "The Father of Aviation Maintenance" and recognizes "The Man Aviation History Almost Forgot".

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate designates May 24, 2003, as "Aircraft Maintenance Technicians Day" in the State of Oklahoma.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Aircraft Maintenance Technicians Association; the Federal Aviation Administration Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center; the curator of the Kirkpatrick Science and Air Space Museum at the Omniplex in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and the Charles Taylor Memorial at Wright State University.

Adopted by the Senate the 21st day of May, 2003.

Presiding Officer of the Senate