

ENROLLED SENATE  
RESOLUTION NO. 19

By: Laster, Capps, Adelson,  
Aldridge, Anderson,  
Barrington, Bass, Branan,  
Brogdon, Cain, Coates,  
Coffee, Corn, Crain,  
Crutchfield, Easley, Eason  
McIntyre, Fisher, Ford,  
Garrison, Gumm, Harrison,  
Hobson, Johnson, Jolley,  
Justice, Kerr, Lamb,  
Laughlin, Lawler, Leftwich,  
Lerblance, Mazzei, Monson,  
Morgan, Myers, Nichols,  
Paddack, Pruitt, Rabon,  
Reynolds, Riley, Shurden,  
Taylor, Wilcoxson,  
Williamson, Wilson and  
Wyrick

A Resolution praising the life and career of Shawnee,  
Oklahoma, astronaut Gordon Cooper; mourning his loss;  
and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, Leroy Gordon "Gordo" Cooper, Jr., was born to Hattie and Leroy Cooper on March 6, 1927, in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Gordon Cooper grew up in Shawnee, graduating from Shawnee High School in 1945. Gordon Cooper enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps after high school and served during 1945 and 1946. He then attended the University of Hawaii, where he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. In 1949, he transferred into the U.S. Air Force, was called to active duty, and completed pilot training. From 1950 to 1954, Cooper was a fighter pilot in Germany. He earned a bachelor of science degree in aeronautical engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in 1956 and completed test pilot school at Edwards Air Force Base in California, then served as a test pilot there; and

WHEREAS, in April 1959, Gordon Cooper at the age of 32 years was the youngest person to be selected as one of the original seven Project Mercury astronauts by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Cooper was the first astronaut to participate in a space flight of more than 24 hours, the first astronaut to sleep in space, the first man to launch a satellite in space, the first American to be televised from space, the first astronaut to go into orbit twice, and the first active-duty military man to address joint sessions of the U.S. Congress twice. In 1965, along with Charles "Pete" Conrad, Jr., Command Pilot Gordon Cooper established a space endurance record in Gemini 5 by traveling more

than 3.3 million miles in 190 hours and 56 minutes. He was the last astronaut to orbit Earth alone and piloted Faith 7, the last flight of NASA's Mercury program; and

WHEREAS, Gordon Cooper returned to his hometown for a parade in his honor in 1963 and also to dedicate a new armed forces reserve center in honor of his father, the late U.S. Army Colonel Leroy Gordon Cooper. He also unveiled a plaque at the new armory named for his father. In May 1963, President John F. Kennedy presented Cooper with the NASA Distinguished Service Medal. Also in 1963, the Oklahoma State Legislature presented an Award of Appreciation to Astronaut Leroy Gordon Cooper on behalf of the People of Oklahoma. The award read: "With pride and admiration for the superior performance and achievements of a native son in the exploration of space and the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge in the traditions and heritage of Oklahoma pioneers." The Gordon Cooper Technology Center in Shawnee is named for him, as are streets in Shawnee and in the State Fair Park in Oklahoma City. He received numerous awards, including the Air Force Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross with cluster, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, the Collier Trophy, and the Harmon Trophy; and

WHEREAS, Gordon Cooper left NASA and retired from the Air Force as a Colonel in 1970. He founded and served as president of Gordon Cooper and Associates, a consulting firm that specialized in technical projects, including aerospace projects. He continued to design and test new aircraft, as well as to enjoy his love of flying. He logged more than 7,000 flight hours in jets and commercial aircraft, as well as 225 hours, 15 minutes and 3 seconds in space. Cooper served on the boards of directors as a technical consultant to a number of companies in the aerospace, electronics, and energy fields. He was also Vice President for Research and Development for Walter E. Disney Enterprises, Inc., from 1974 to 1980. In the 1990s, Cooper was a test pilot and chaired the Galaxy Group, Inc., a company that modified, designed, built, and tested smaller airplanes for private aviation; and

WHEREAS, Gordon Cooper's brash, fearless, rambunctious attitude was immortalized in Tom Wolfe's book, "The Right Stuff", and later in the 1983 movie bearing the same title. Cooper wrote his own book, "Leap of Faith", in 2000. Leading an active life, his hobbies included treasure hunting, archaeology, racing, flying, skiing, boating, hunting, and fishing; and

WHEREAS, Shawnee, Oklahoma, native Gordon Cooper died in Ventura, California, on October 4, 2004, at 77 years of age. Memorial services were held on Friday, October 15, 2004, at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 50TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate praises the life and professional career of Shawnee, Oklahoma, astronaut Gordon Cooper as a space pioneer, a true embodiment of the Oklahoma Spirit, and one who demonstrated "The Right Stuff".

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate deeply mourns this genuine trail-blazing space hero and joins our state and nation in offering its heartfelt condolences to the family, friends, and coworkers of Oklahoma astronaut Gordon Cooper.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Gordon Cooper Technology Center in Shawnee, Oklahoma; the Oklahoma Aviation and Space Hall of Fame located at the Omniplex in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Mayor Chuck Mills of Shawnee, Oklahoma.

Adopted by the Senate the 14th day of April, 2005.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate