

ENROLLED SENATE
RESOLUTION NO. 38

By: Newberry

A Resolution finding Bill Arter the inspiration for "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy"; commending Bill Arter's life and career; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, William "Bill" Bernard Arter was born June 10, 1923, in Woodriver, Illinois, the son of James and Lillian Arter. As a young man he tried out as a second baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals and was told to report for spring training. Instead, Bill was drafted into military service during World War II and reported to the United States Army. He was assigned to the Medical Unit of Company B; and

WHEREAS, Bill Arter played the bugle. The Army was racially segregated at the time, and Company C was an all-black outfit. Whenever he had the opportunity, Bill would visit Company C for jam sessions, thus earning him the nickname, "The Bugle Boy from Company B"; and

WHEREAS, Bill Arter earned five Bronze Stars during his military service. Bill celebrated his 21st birthday deployed with the third wave during the D-Day invasion where he won one of his Bronze Stars. As a medic he cared for wounded soldiers, but his care was not limited to medical matters as he entertained the troops as well. Throughout the war Bill would join with a few other musically inclined soldiers and entertain what would eventually total thousands of troops; and

WHEREAS, Don Raye and Hughie Prince wrote the song, "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy", which was introduced by the Andrews Sisters in the 1941 Abbott and Costello movie, "Buck Privates". "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Song. In 1973, Bette Midler rerecorded the song which was a number-one single on the Billboard Adult Contemporary Chart. The song is ranked number six on Songs of the Century; and

WHEREAS, Bill Arter moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he met and married his wife, Lois. Their 52-year marriage resulted in four daughters, three sons, eleven grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren. Bill and Lois built a Christian retreat in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, and Bill continued to play at church, military funerals, and social events. William Arter died on February 4, 2009, surrounded by his family in the family home in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. Bill Arter was about four things: God, Family, Country, and Music; and

WHEREAS, Bill Arter was discovered by the Andrews Sisters while he was in Basic Training. While others are sometimes mentioned as the inspiration for their famous song, it was Bill Arter whose history of jam sessions with the black soldiers of Company C during World War II most closely fits the lyrics of the song and whose association with the Andrews Sisters is not shared by other claimants.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 52ND OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate finds that William "Bill" Arter is most likely the inspiration for the song, "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy".

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate commends the life and career of Bill Arter; his heroic service during World War II; his building a Christian retreat; his role as husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather; and his lifelong dedication to God, Family, Country, and Music.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to Bill Arter's wife, Lois; four daughters, Brenda, Teresa, Cynthia, and Nichole; three sons, William, Jesse, and James; the Oklahoma Heritage Association; and the Oklahoma History Center.

Adopted by the Senate the 13th day of May, 2009.

Presiding Officer of the Senate