

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 52nd Legislature (2009)

3 SENATE
4 RESOLUTION 38

By: Newberry

5
6 AS INTRODUCED

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, Bill Arter earned five Bronze Stars during his military
23 service. Bill celebrated his 21st birthday deployed with the third
24 wave during the D-Day invasion where he won one of his Bronze Stars.

1 As a medic he cared for wounded soldiers, but his care was not
2 limited to medical matters as he entertained the troops as well.
3 Throughout the war Bill would join with a few other musically
4 inclined soldiers and entertain what would eventually total
5 thousands of troops; and

6 WHEREAS, Don Raye and Hughie Prince wrote the song, "Boogie
7 Woogie Bugle Boy", which was introduced by the Andrews Sisters in
8 the 1941 Abbott and Costello movie, "Buck Privates". "Boogie Woogie
9 Bugle Boy" was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Song. In
10 1973, Bette Midler rerecorded the song which was a number-one single
11 on the Billboard Adult Contemporary Chart. The song is ranked
12 number six on Songs of the Century; and

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

22 WHEREAS, Bill Arter was discovered by the Andrews Sisters while
23 he was in Basic Training. While others are sometimes mentioned as
24 the inspiration for their famous song, it was Bill Arter whose

1 history of jam sessions with the black soldiers of Company C during
2 World War II most closely fits the lyrics of the song and whose
3 association with the Andrews Sisters is not shared by other
4 claimants.

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

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

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

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

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