

1 ENGROSSED SENATE
2 CONCURRENT
3 RESOLUTION NO. 23

By: Fields, Aldridge, Allen,
Anderson, Ballenger,
Barrington, Bass, Bingman,
Boggs, Branan, Brecheen,
Brinkley, Brooks, Brown,
Burrage, Coates, Crain,
Dahm, David, Ellis, Ford,
Garrison, Griffin,
Halligan, Holt, Ivester,
Johnson (Constance),
Johnson (Rob), Jolley,
Justice, Loveless, Marlatt,
Mazzei, McAffrey, Newberry,
Paddack, Schulz, Sharp,
Shaw, Shortey, Shumate,
Simpson, Sparks,
Standridge, Stanislowski,
Sykes, Treat and Wyrick of
the Senate

12 and

13 Roberts (Sean) of the House

14
15 A Concurrent Resolution honoring the life and
16 achievements of Oklahoma-born ballerina, Maria
17 Tallchief; mourning her passing and expressing
18 condolences to her family; and directing
19 distribution.

20 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Marie Tall Chief was born on January 24, 1925
21 in Fairfax, Oklahoma, to Ruth Porter Tall Chief, of Scottish-Irish
22 descent, and Alexander Joseph Tall Chief, a full-blood Osage Indian.
23 Known as Betty Marie as a girl, she learned the traditions of the
24 Osage from her grandmother, Eliza Bigheart Tall Chief; and

1 WHEREAS, at the age of the eight, her family moved to Los
2 Angeles where she and her younger sister, Marjorie, studied dance.
3 After high school, Betty Marie traveled to New York and apprenticed
4 with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and in 1942, she became a
5 member of the company's Corps de Ballet; and

6 WHEREAS, in that era, American ballerinas often adopted Russian
7 stage names and she was pressured to change her name to Maria
8 Tallchieva. Proud of her Osage heritage, she refused, but did
9 change her name to Maria Tallchief; and

10 WHEREAS, Maria Tallchief rose to international stardom in the
11 world of dance, becoming widely regarded as one of the most
12 important ballerinas of the 20th century and considered to be
13 America's first prima ballerina. She became the wife and muse of the
14 great Russian choreographer, George Balanchine, and he choreographed
15 starring roles for her in what have become some of the world's best
16 loved ballets, including The Firebird, Swan Lake, and The
17 Nutcracker. Although their marriage ended in 1951, the two
18 continued to work together. Maria credited Balanchine with making
19 her a star in the world of ballet; and

20 WHEREAS, Tallchief also danced with numerous other companies
21 during her career. She was the first American ballerina to perform
22 with the Paris Opera, and the first to perform in Moscow's Bolshoi
23 Theater. In 1952, she portrayed ballerina Anna Pavlova in the MGM
24 film, "Million Dollar Mermaid." After retiring from the stage,

1 Tallchief founded Chicago's Ballet School of the Lyric Opera and
2 served as artistic director of the Chicago City Ballet; and

3 WHEREAS, despite her great success, she never forgot her
4 Oklahoma roots. The Oklahoma Legislature declared June 29, 1953, as
5 Maria Tallchief Day. In 1991, she and four other Oklahoma-born
6 Indian prima ballerinas, Rosella Hightower, Yvonne Chouteau,
7 Moscelyn Larkin, and Maria's sister, Marjorie Tallchief, were
8 portrayed in artist Mike Larson's Oklahoma State Capitol mural,
9 Flight of Spirit, and the five ballerinas were named Oklahoma
10 cultural treasures in 1997. Her other awards included the
11 Prestigious Kennedy Center Honors, the National Medal of Arts, and
12 the National Women's Hall of Fame; and

13 WHEREAS, Maria Tallchief died on Thursday, April 11, 2013, in
14 Chicago at the age of 88. She is survived by her daughter, Elise
15 Paschen; son-in-law, Stuart Brainerd; her sister, Marjorie
16 Tallchief; and two grandchildren.

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION
18 OF THE 54TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
19 CONCURRING THEREIN:

20 THAT the Oklahoma Legislature honors the life and achievements
21 of Oklahoma-born ballerina, Maria Tallchief.

22 THAT the Oklahoma Legislature mourns her passing and expresses
23 condolences to her family.

24

1 THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to her daughter,
2 Elise Paschen.

3 Adopted by the Senate the 18th day of April, 2013.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

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7 Adopted by the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____,
8 2013.

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Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

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