

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 54th Legislature (2013)

3 SENATE
4 RESOLUTION 34

By: Sharp and Brecheen

5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 A Resolution recognizing the life and accomplishments
8 of Gordon Cooper; declaring May 15, 2013, as "Gordon
9 Cooper Day in Oklahoma"; and directing distribution.

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11 WHEREAS, Gordon Cooper was an American aeronautical engineer,
12 test pilot and one of the seven original astronauts in Project
13 Mercury, the first manned space program of the United States; and

14 WHEREAS, Leroy Gordon Cooper was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma, on
15 March 6, 1927, and grew up in the community; and

16 WHEREAS, in 1945, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. Then in
17 1948, after completing three years of coursework at the University
18 of Ohio, Cooper received a U.S. Army Commission. He then transferred
19 his commission to the U.S. Air Force in 1949 and was placed on
20 active duty and received flight training at Perrin Air Force Base in
21 Texas and Williams Air Force Base in Arizona; and

22 WHEREAS, Cooper's first flight assignment came in 1950 at
23 Landstuhl Air Base in West Germany where he flew F-84 Thunderjets
24 and F-86 Sabres. While in Germany he also attended the European

1 Extension of the University of Maryland. He then returned to the
2 U.S. and completed his bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering at
3 the Air Force Institute of Technology in Ohio in 1957; and

4 WHEREAS, Cooper was then assigned to the Experimental Flight
5 Test School at Edwards Air Force Base in California, and after
6 graduation was posted to the Flight Test Engineering Division at
7 Edwards, where he served as a test pilot and project manager testing
8 the F-102A and F-106B. Cooper logged more than 7,000 hours of flight
9 time, with 4,000 hours in jet aircraft. He flew all types of
10 commercial and general aviation airplanes and helicopters; and

11 WHEREAS, while at Edwards, he went to Washington, D.C. for a
12 NASA briefing on Project Mercury and was selected from 109 pilots to
13 become the youngest of the first seven American astronauts; and

14 WHEREAS, Cooper was launched into space on May 15, 1963, aboard
15 the Mercury-Atlas 9 (Faith 7) spacecraft, the last Mercury mission.
16 He orbited the Earth 22 times and logged more time in space than all
17 five previous Mercury astronauts combined at just over 34 hours
18 traveling 546,167 miles at 17,547 mph. He was the first American
19 astronaut to sleep not only in orbit but on the launch pad; and

20 WHEREAS, two years later, Cooper flew as command pilot of Gemini
21 5 on an eight-day, 120-orbit mission with Pete Conrad. The two
22 astronauts set a new space endurance record by traveling a distance
23 of just over 3.3 million miles in nearly 191 hours, showing that

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1 astronauts could survive in space for the length of time necessary
2 to go from the Earth to the Moon and back; and

3 WHEREAS, Cooper was the first astronaut to make a second orbital
4 flight. He later served as backup command pilot for Gemini 12 and
5 Apollo 10 but was not selected as commander of Apollo 13; and

6 WHEREAS, having flown 222 hours in space, Colonel Cooper retired
7 from NASA and the Air Force in July 1970. After leaving NASA, he
8 served on several corporate boards and as technical consultant for
9 several companies in fields ranging from high performance boat
10 design to energy, construction, and aircraft design; and

11 WHEREAS, Cooper received an honorary doctorate of science from
12 Oklahoma State University in 1967. He also received many awards
13 including, among others, the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished
14 Flying Cross with oak leaf clusters, the NASA Exceptional
15 Achievement Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Collier
16 Trophy, the Harmon Trophy and the John F. Kennedy Trophy; and

17 WHEREAS, Shawnee named its Career Technology Center and Highway
18 18 between Shawnee and Tecumseh after Cooper, who passed away on
19 October 4, 2004, at the age of 77; and

20 WHEREAS, May 15, 2013, marks the 50th anniversary of Cooper's
21 spaceflight.

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION
23 OF THE 54TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

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1 THAT the Oklahoma State Senate recognizes the life and many
2 accomplishments of Oklahoma's son, Gordon Cooper.

3 THAT the Oklahoma State Senate declares May 15, 2013, as "Gordon
4 Cooper Day" in Oklahoma.

5 THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to Shawnee mayor,
6 Wes Mainord.

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