

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 132

BY SENATOR PEACOCK

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend James Burton for an outstanding career of over sixty years as a performer, musician, and Louisiana music legend, and to congratulate him on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.

WHEREAS, born in Dubberly, Louisiana, on August 21, 1939, James Edward Burton grew up in Shreveport; he received his first guitar as a youngster and was playing professionally by the age of fourteen; he was a self-taught musical phenomenon; and

WHEREAS, as he listened to KWKH radio, he was influenced by popular guitarists of the day such as Chet Atkins, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Elmore James, Lightnin' Hopkins and many others whose genres covered Rock and Roll, Delta Blues, and Country music; and

WHEREAS, James was required to obtain a special permit to play in nightclubs due to his age, however, his guitar playing showed such promise that he was asked to join the staff band of the legendary radio show, the Louisiana Hayride, and he played backup for the likes of George Jones, Billy Walker, and Johnny Horton, and within a few years, James would be a headliner at the show; and

WHEREAS, he honed his craft on a variety of guitar types that included acoustic, steel guitar, slide dobro, and electric styles like Fender Telecasters; no matter who played lead guitar, James Burton had the guitar "licks" to complement the lead note-for-note; and

WHEREAS, while still a teenager, he left home for Los Angeles, California, where he made his mark in the world as one of the most prolific recording session musicians that ever lived, and performed as "specialty" artist on thousands of recordings; and

WHEREAS, not every recording was an instant hit, however, Burton created a guitar solo on Dale Hawkins' 1957 hit song, "Susie Q", a recording that made the list of the *500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll* published by the *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame*; and

WHEREAS, his playing style was very distinct; he used a straight pick and a finger

pick on his middle finger; he replaced the first four guitar strings with banjo strings which allowed him to bend the strings to create his legendary chicken pickin' sound; and

WHEREAS, James was a much sought-after musician who has performed with the Everly Brothers, Dean Martin, Johnny Cash, Bobby Darin, and anyone else who he could fit into his session schedule; and

WHEREAS, he performed as a band member with Ricky Nelson, Emmylou Harris, John Denver, Jerry Lee Lewis, Glen Campbell, Elvis Costello, and a host of others; and

WHEREAS, fifty years ago, in 1969, James joined Elvis Presley, organized his band, served as its leader, and backed Elvis until his death in 1977; while in concert, if Elvis exclaimed, "Play it, James", that was his cue for a superb guitar solo; and

WHEREAS, Burton has a well-deserved reputation as one of the finest guitar musicians in either country or rock and perhaps he is one of the best guitar players to ever touch a fretboard; he is ranked number 19 in the list of the 100 Greatest Guitarists published by *Rolling Stone Magazine*; and

WHEREAS, James Burton is truly a legend in American music; he is a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (2001); he is a recognized guitarist by the Rockabilly Hall of Fame and the Musicians Hall of Fame and Museum (2007); he won a Grammy for Best Country Instrumental Performance (2009); he was inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame (2009); and he was inducted into the Louisiana Folklife Center Hall of Master Folk Artists (2018); and

WHEREAS, James uses his music and his talents to promote the James Burton International Guitar Festival, a three-day festival with featured guest musicians; the event is a fundraiser for the James Burton Foundation, a nonprofit organization that raises funds needed to provide musical instruments and scholarships to deserving children, young adults, and veterans; and

WHEREAS, James Burton owes a large portion of his success to his loving wife, Louise; she is his rock, his strength during stressful times, and his soulmate; Louise has made a home for them, a place to return to after grueling months on the road, a safe haven filled with joy and shared memories of their wonderful life together; and

WHEREAS, James Burton spent a lifetime touring with famous bands, performing

in recording sessions, sometimes without recognition; playing his guitars from morning until night, however, he never tired of the thrill of live performances or recording sessions that laid down a chart-busting track that was assured to be a number one hit.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Louisiana music legend, James Burton, of Shreveport on the occasion of his eightieth birthday on August 21, 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby acknowledge that James Burton is a living legend and does hereby commend him on his many outstanding accomplishments and for sharing his music throughout the state of Louisiana, the nation, and the world.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mr. James E. Burton.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES