

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 49

BY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

STATING LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND HONORING MILDRED RINKER BAILEY.

Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

WHEREAS, Mildred Rinker Bailey, now remembered as the "First Girl Singer" who performed with a big band in America, was an enrolled member of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and raised on the family farm near De Smet, Idaho, on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation; and

WHEREAS, Mildred Bailey's mother, Josephine, also a Coeur d'Alene Tribal Member, was an accomplished pianist and spent many hours instructing Mildred and her brother, Al, on singing and playing music; and

WHEREAS, at the age of twelve, Mildred and her family moved to Spokane, Washington, where she and her brother, Al, became lifelong friends with a local singing drummer they recruited named Harry (Bing) Crosby; and

WHEREAS, in his 1953 autobiography Bing Crosby recalled "I was lucky in knowing the great jazz and blues singer Mildred Bailey so early in life. She made records which are still vocal classics and she taught me much about singing and interpreting popular songs"; and

WHEREAS, Mildred Bailey moved to Los Angeles, California, in the early 1920s where she began singing in cabarets around Hollywood and helped Bing Crosby find work with a traveling jazz show that Crosby later credited with launching his career; and

WHEREAS, Mildred Bailey landed a spot with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra, the most famous big band in America, where Bailey became the "First Girl Singer" to perform with a big band, a groundbreaking achievement that opened the door of opportunity for later jazz greats; and

WHEREAS, her notable recordings included popular songs of the day such as "Rockin' Chair," "Honeysuckle Rose," "When Day is Done," "'Long About Midnight," "Thanks for the Memory," "I Don't Stand a Ghost of a Chance With You," "Darn That Dream," and many more; and

WHEREAS, Mildred Bailey was one of the most popular jazz singers of her era, voted by national magazines as the "Top Female Jazz Vocalist" multiple times and was inducted into the Big Band and Jazz Hall of Fame in 1989; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Postal Service commemorated her historic contribution to jazz by issuing a 29-cent stamp with her picture on it in 1994, joining Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith in receiving that recognition.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-first Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate concurring therein, that we recognize and honor Mildred Rinker Bailey as a jazz pioneer who blazed a trail that hundreds of other women have now traveled, and we will never forget her contributions to the American jazz and blues musical idiom.

1           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mildred Rinker Bailey should be appropri-  
2 ately recognized for such achievements by organizations dedicated to the  
3 recognition of outstanding artist contributions to jazz music.