

## COMMITTEES:

AGRICULTURE

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HUTCHINSON, KANSAS 67301

## Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

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(The following is a text of remarks I will make on the House Floor Thursday, February 9. Attached hereto is a copy of the Joint Resolution I will introduce the same day.)

## WALT DISNEY -- A GREAT AMERICAN

Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a joint resolution authorizing the posthumous issuance of a gold medal to the late Walt Disney. This resolution provides that the President, in the name of the people of our nation, shall present this medal in recognition of Walt Disney's contributions to the culture of the United States.

Our nation lost one of its most illustrious and important citizens on December 15, 1966, when Walt Disney passed away. He had been called Hollywood's only authentic genius.

Walt Disney's name has been synonymous with the best in the field of entertainment. He also reached the peak of creativity in bringing to peoples all over the world hundreds of hours of pleasure. Since 1928, when he launched his Mickey Mouse series, he won international acclaim for his ingenuity and ability to bring to the screen the wonders of animation.

He was the winner of about 30 Motion Picture Academy Award Oscars, and over <sup>900</sup>~~700~~ other awards, including decorations from foreign governments, gold medals, trophies, and citations from national and international organizations, newspapers, magazines, and Churches.

On May 23, 1966, Disney received a once-in-a-century award as an outstanding humanitarian from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, at its 100th Anniversary Annual Meeting in New York City. He was cited for his role as a "teacher of kindness and compassion". During the presentation Walt Disney was characterized as a "corporate pathfinder and an architect of the imaginative without peer in the field of humane education".

How highly Walt Disney is regarded by his fellow Americans was indicated when he received the George Washington medal, highest award of the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. Former President Eisenhower, serving as Chairman of the Foundation's Board of Directors, made the presentation. He read a citation honoring:

"Walt Disney, Ambassador of Freedom for the U.S.A. ...."

As a youth his home was Kansas City, Missouri, and there he began to draw and dream of animated cartoons which could be projected on the motion picture screen. He was the youngest of five children and was born in Chicago, Illinois. He served

in World War I as a Red Cross ambulance driver. Advertising art gave him the first outlet for his great talents and eventually he went to California, where he formed a partnership with his brother.

Walt Disney's contributions to the motion picture screen since the twenties are legion: Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Fantasia, Snow White, Pinocchio, So Dear to My Heart, Peter Pan, Seal Island, the Living Desert, the Vanishing Prairie, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, and Mary Poppins, to mention a few.

His contributions never ceased. Generations have laughed and cried at his creations. His sensitivity was unparalleled and he knew how to reach the entire family. He was the greatest of entertainers. He was a magician without pretense. It has been recorded that he was one of the most influential men alive.

Walt Disney came to the top the "hard way". He had a tremendous drive. The Disney studio atmosphere, said a former executive, was one of "compulsory democracy". The lowliest ink-girl called Walt by his first name.

In 1954 Time magazine recorded that through Disney's feeling for animals he was related to nature and to the mother warmth of the earth. "Out of this earthiness, Walt feels, there sprout whatever seeds of creativity he has. 'I'm an earthy guy, all right,' he says."

Walt Disney served as National Wild Life Week chairman, sponsored by the National Federation of Wildlife, for approximately a dozen years. While he was not identified with any particular type of conservation, he was an honorary member of the National Wildlife Federation.

Great credit should go to Walt Disney for his nature films, both motion pictures and television. He did excellent work in the whole area of nature. As an individualist he brought the word "conservation" to the people. This idea has always been thoroughly interwoven into his nature films.

He produced short television scripts on wild life at no cost to the Federation of Wild Life. Further, Walt Disney accomplished an enormous amount of work in conservation which went unnoticed because he did not advertise it. Disney constantly brought the necessity of conservation to the eyes of individuals which made them "think" conservation.

Particularly during the time when understanding and sympathy have been and are so important between countries allied with the United States against the terror of communism, Walt Disney's creations have always had a message for every citizen of the United States. He never portrayed violence.

What can we say of Walt Disney that has not been said before? Volumes have been written about him. He has been called the most ingenious artist of our day, America's idol, a giant of the motion picture industry.

Disneyland opened its doors July 18, 1955, and became a mecca for travelers the

world over. About 50 million persons --- at the rate of 6 million yearly -- had passed through its turnstiles by 1965, including kings and commoners.

Through the years Walt Disney continued to bring to us hours of clean and fascinating entertainment which old and young have shared together. He did good wherever he went.

To this great artist and loyal American we owe a debt of gratitude and our profound thanks for sharing with us his God-given talents.

To his wife, Lillian; his daughters, Mrs. Ronald Miller and Mrs. Robert Brown; his seven grandchildren; and his brother, Roy, I extend my prayerful sympathy in this time of sadness.

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(THE TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION IS AS FOLLOWS)

JOINT RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Posthumous Issuance of a Gold Medal to the Late Walt Disney.

Whereas Walt Disney's name is synonymous with the best in the field of entertainment, having been awarded thirty Motion Picture Academy Awards, ~~five~~ <sup>five</sup> Emmys, and over ~~seven~~ <sup>seven</sup> hundred miscellaneous citations for such contributions as Fantasia, Snow White, Pinnocchio, the Mickey Mouse series, and 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea;

Whereas his dedication to the conservation and development of natural resources was exemplified in his serving as Chairman of National Wild Life Week and in his nature films and television scripts on wild life; and his outstanding humanitarian efforts were recognized when he received the once-in-a-century award from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals;

Whereas his occupation in drawing and dreaming of animated cartoons goes back to his youth in Kansas City, Missouri;

Whereas Walt Disney brought us hours of clean and fascinating entertainment which old and young will continue to share together; and

Whereas to this great artist and loyal American we owe a debt of gratitude and our profound thanks for having shared with us his God-given talents: Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is authorized to present posthumously in the name of the people of the United States of America a gold medal of appropriate design to Walt Disney in recognition of his contributions to the culture of the United States.

Sec. 2. The Secretary of the Treasury shall cause such a medal to be struck and furnished to the President.

Sec. 3. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated the sum of \$2,500 to carry out the provisions of this joint resolution.