

SENATE RESOLUTION 133

By Harper

A RESOLUTION to honor The Fairfield Four upon ninety-five years of musical excellence.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take great pleasure in paying tribute to The Fairfield Four, a traditional African-American a cappella gospel group that began performing nearly 100 years ago; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Four started as a trio in Nashville's Fairfield Baptist Church in 1921; in 1989, the group's members were designated as National Heritage Fellows by the National Endowment for the Arts for their adherence to traditional gospel music while still producing new and exciting work; and

WHEREAS, beginning in the 1990s, The Fairfield Four reached heights of fame previously unknown to gospel singers, appearing on John Fogerty's album *Blue Moon Swamp*, on which they sang on the track "A Hundred and Ten in the Shade," and also singing live with Mr. Fogerty; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Four sang with Elvis Costello on "That Day is Done," which appeared on the group's Grammy-winning album for Best Traditional Gospel Recording, *I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray*; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Four also appeared on the song "There Will Be Peace in the Valley for Me" by Dolly Parton on her album *For God and Country* and were featured on the song "Rock of Ages" by Amy Grant and Vince Gill on Ms. Grant's album *Rock of Ages ... Hymns and Faith*; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Four appeared as a quintet in the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, in which they shared a scene with George Clooney as a group of singing gravediggers; their contribution to the film's soundtrack, "Lonesome Valley," earned the group a second Grammy for Album of the Year; and

WHEREAS, although they have been lionized for their work with popular artists, The Fairfield Four have maintained their authenticity by carrying on traditional gospel stylings exemplified by the Bessemer Sunset Four, the Birmingham Jubilee Singers, and the Famous Blue Jay Singers with Silas Steele; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Four recently won their third Grammy for their newest release, *Still Rockin' My Soul!*, which was honored as the Best Roots Gospel Album at the 58th Grammy Awards and which stands as testament to the group's relevance and enduring popularity in today's rapidly changing musical industry; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Four have been honored with the Tennessee Lifetime Achievement Award, and the James Cleveland Stellar Award and were inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1999; and

WHEREAS, one of The Fairfield Four's career highlights occurred when they received a standing ovation at Carnegie Hall after performing "Lonesome Valley"; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Fairfield Four greatly miss their colleague, Robert Hamlett, who passed away earlier this year; and

WHEREAS, The Fairfield Four have reached the very pinnacle of gospel music, and they are richly deserving of this body's commendation; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor The Fairfield Four upon ninety-five years of musical excellence, reflecting fondly upon their legacy as supremely gifted and incredibly popular gospel artists, and extend to them our best wishes for continued success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.