

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 28—SENATORS RAGGIO, AMODEI, CARE, CARLTON, CEGAVSKE, COFFIN, HARDY, MATHEWS, MCGINNESS, NEAL, NOLAN, O'CONNELL, RAWSON, RHOADS, SCHNEIDER, SHAFFER, TIFFANY, TITUS, TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON AND WIENER

APRIL 14, 2003

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Read and Adopted

SUMMARY—Memorializes journalist, distinguished writer and newspaper executive, Rollan Melton. (BDR R-125)

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~fornitted-material~~ is material to be omitted.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Memorializing journalist, distinguished writer and newspaper executive, Rollan Melton.

1 WHEREAS, The members of the Nevada Legislature join the
2 family and friends of Rollan Melton in mourning the passing and
3 remembering the life of the man who believed that the chief mission
4 of any good newspaper should be to provide readers with the
5 information necessary to understand their community's past and
6 present; and

7 WHEREAS, Born in Boise, Idaho, on July 24, 1931, Rollan
8 Melton moved with his family from town to town and attended 18
9 different elementary schools by the time his mother settled in



1 Fallon, Nevada, where Rollan attended high school, played high
2 school football and got a job as an apprentice printer at the Fallon
3 Standard; and

4 WHEREAS, The Fallon High School faculty voted to award
5 Rollan a Harold's Club college scholarship which gave him the
6 opportunity to attend the University of Nevada, Reno, where he
7 continued the dual disciplines of football and journalism that would
8 set him on a course for the remainder of his life; and

9 WHEREAS, After his graduation from the University of Nevada,
10 Reno, in 1955, Rollan spent 2 years in the United States Army,
11 during which he was appointed Public Information Officer of the 1st
12 Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas, and was asked to coach the
13 Fort's football team; and

14 WHEREAS, Following his discharge from the Army, Rollan
15 Melton joined the *Reno Evening Gazette* and became its Sports
16 Editor in 1957, its Promotion Leader following an attempted work
17 stoppage at the newspaper, its Editor by the age of 32 and, with just
18 9 years in the company, the Publisher of both the *Reno Evening*
19 *Gazette* and the *Nevada State Journal* in 1966; and

20 WHEREAS, Rollan's seemingly insatiable appetite for knowledge
21 and his ability to learn from everyone with whom he worked spurred
22 his career in the world of journalism which continued when Rollan
23 became Vice President of the Speidel Newspaper Group in 1969,
24 was chosen its President just 3 years later, and after Speidel merged
25 with the Gannett newspaper chain in 1977, was named Senior Vice
26 President of Gannett's Western Division and a Gannett board
27 member; and

28 WHEREAS, After only 2 years, Rollan resigned his vice-
29 presidency and returned to Reno to write his popular column in the
30 *Reno Gazette-Journal* because, as he expressed it in the preface to
31 his book *Nevadans*, he "yearned to go back to the people and the
32 telling of their stories"; and

33 WHEREAS, During his 24 years as a columnist for the *Reno-*
34 *Gazette Journal*, Rollan Melton used his wit and love of the people
35 of Nevada to paint story pictures which Robert Laxalt called "a
36 mosaic of the personality, character and attitudes of the true
37 Nevadan" that could only be written by someone "with sensitivity to
38 the state's people"; and

39 WHEREAS, Some of Rollan Melton's nearly 4,000 newspaper
40 columns are presented again in his books, *Nevadans*, and *101*
41 *Nevada Columns*, and these books, along with his autobiographical
42 *Sonny's Story: A Journalist's Memoir*, that relates an American
43 success story of almost mythic proportions, validate his membership
44 in the Nevada Writers' Hall of Fame, which named him a 2001
45 Honoree; and



1 WHEREAS, Named Distinguished Nevadan in 1979 and inducted
2 into the Nevada Newspaper Hall of Fame in 1998, Rollan Melton
3 will also be remembered for his involvement in philanthropic
4 organizations, which included his generous support of and deep
5 interest in the University of Nevada Oral History Program; and

6 WHEREAS, Rollan Melton is survived by his wife Marilyn, his
7 sons, Royle, Wayne and Kevin, his daughter, Emelie Williams, and
8 his grandchildren; now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE
10 ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the members of the 72nd Session of
11 the Nevada Legislature extend their heartfelt sympathy to the family
12 and friends of Rollan Melton; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Rollan Melton Elementary School, which
14 opened in northwest Reno in the fall of 2002, and the Rollan D.
15 Melton Post Office Building, which was named by Public Law
16 107-267, passed on October 30, 2002, will remind Nevadans of the
17 man who enriched lives with his compassionate and humorous
18 stories of the legends and the unknowns of this state; and be it
19 further

20 RESOLVED, That Rollan Melton's life, in his own words "an
21 against-all-odds trip, from ragamuffin little kid to director on the
22 governing board of one of the premier media corporations of all
23 time," will encourage everyone who knew him, personally or
24 through his writing, to grow continually toward the potential that is
25 available through preparation and hard work; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and
27 transmit a copy of this resolution to his loving wife,
28 Marilyn Melton.

