

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 74

BY REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON

A RESOLUTION

To commend Gene Stewart for his accomplishments.

WHEREAS, Gene Stewart was born in Carthage, Mississippi, on July 21, 1938, and has been a resident of Rayville, Louisiana, for over eighty years; his family moved to Louisiana in the 1940s and worked as tenant farmers in Richland Parish; as a schoolboy, he farmed cotton and corn while learning guitar and singing and writing with his mother and cousins; and

WHEREAS, Gene attended Holly Ridge High School and started a five-piece country/rockabilly band named "Gene Stewart and the Rockin' Rebels"; the band became a mainstay at the Twin City Jamboree in West Monroe, Louisiana, and the Grand Old Auction Barn in Delhi, Louisiana; he also met James Burton, Elvis Presley's lead guitarist and band leader, while in Delhi; and

WHEREAS, after graduating, Gene enlisted in the United States Army; while he cherishes the country life and possesses a genuine respect for farmers, he wanted an alternative to a life of farming; and

WHEREAS, while stationed at Fort Hood, Texas, Gene continued to nurture his love of music by performing with local bands; on one occasion in 1957, he had the opportunity to perform a rock & roll gig with Clyde "Barefoot" Chesser; when the U.S. Army sent him to Ulm, Germany, he played with German bands at the noncommissioned officers club; and

WHEREAS, upon completion of his military service, Gene returned home and re-formed the Rockin' Rebels, and the band began playing at the Twin City Jamboree at the Fairgrounds Exhibit Building in West Monroe; in 1959, he and the band opened for Jerry Lee Lewis; and

WHEREAS, Gene began playing regularly at Delta Village, a tourist attraction west of Tallulah, Louisiana, in the early 1970s; he also made regular appearances on various country shows and at Elks and Moose Lodges in different cities; and

WHEREAS, Gene made his first recording, "Rub It In", at Camaro Records in Memphis, Tennessee; the song became a regional hit before Billy Crash Craddock's version became nationally famous; he also recorded a variety of other songs including "It's Not Much But It's Home", which is a song about his hometown of Rayville and was recorded by Enchanted Records; in 1975, he wrote and recorded "Face of an Angel", which became the most requested song at KRIH radio station in that year; and

WHEREAS, Gene began working at the United States Post Office in Rayville in 1961; he went on to serve there for forty-two years as a clerk/carrier, superintendent of postal operations, and for his final sixteen years of service, as postmaster; he was a member of the National League of Postmasters and National Association of Postmasters of the United States; he was especially active in the National League of Postmasters, serving as state membership chair and as a national membership committee member; and

WHEREAS, Gene also started a part-time career in real estate and after retiring from the post office became a full-time broker and investor with his wife, D'Juana; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stewart has served his community in a variety of ways; he was a member of the Kiwanis Club, serving as president from 1989 to 1990, and the Junior Chamber of Commerce; he was also active in the Loyal Order of the Moose and Woodmen of the World; he is currently a member of the Richland Parish Chamber of Commerce, serves as a notary public, mentors young musicians, and is a faithful member of First Baptist Church in Rayville; and

WHEREAS, Gene Stewart is most deserving of recognition for his many accomplishments and his dedication to Rayville and Richland Parish.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Gene Stewart for his accomplishments and does hereby extend sincerest wishes that he continue to prosper in all of his endeavors for many years to come.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES