

House Resolution 295 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representative Jenkins of the 8th

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring poet and novelist Byron Herbert Reece by dedicating a portion of U.S. Highway
2 129 as the "Byron Herbert Reece Memorial Highway" and by naming him "Georgia's
3 Appalachian Poet/Novelist"; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, Byron Herbert Reece produced an enduring body of poetry and fiction from the
5 sounds and spirits of his North Georgia homeland; and

6 WHEREAS, his five volumes of verse draw deeply from the lyrical wellsprings of nature and
7 the Bible, twin legacies of an upbringing in the agricultural uplands of Union County near
8 Blairsville; and

9 WHEREAS, his two novels are remarkable regional portraits, one a mountain family drama
10 of overland journey to Old Testament rhythms and the other a morality play of a small town
11 lynching; and

12 WHEREAS, Reece was a bright and solitary schoolboy who graduated from Blairsville High
13 School and grew up in such rural isolation that he never saw a car until he was over eight
14 years old; and

15 WHEREAS, he attended Young Harris College and taught school intermittently between
16 1935 and 1942 producing poem after poem while caring for his ill parents and managing the
17 family farm; and

18 WHEREAS, he won the *American Poet* magazine's annual poetry award in 1943 and by 1952
19 had received a Pulitzer Prize nomination for his poetry, had been profiled in *Newsweek*
20 magazine, and had been tendered a poet-in-residence position at UCLA; and

1 WHEREAS, he received the Georgia Writers Association literary achievement award five
2 times and served as the poet-in-residence at both Young Harris College and Emory
3 University; and

4 WHEREAS, a play inspired by his writings, "The Reach of Song," was declared the official
5 drama of the State of Georgia in 1990; and

6 WHEREAS, despite enduring hardships, this remarkable man created a literary oeuvre which
7 has reflected great honor on his beloved mountain community and the State of Georgia.

8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
9 GEORGIA that the members of this body recognize the tremendous literary contributions to
10 this state made by Byron Herbert Reece.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the portion of U.S. Highway 129 lying between the
12 historic courthouse of Union County in Blairsville, Georgia, southward to the Union County
13 line located at Neel's Gap on Blood Mountain shall be dedicated the "Byron Herbert Reece
14 Memorial Highway," and the Department of Transportation is authorized and directed to
15 place and maintain appropriate signs so dedicating the highway.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Byron Herbert Reece is hereby named "Georgia's
17 Appalachian Poet/Novelist."

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
19 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of Byron Herbert
20 Reece, the Byron Herbert Reece Society, and the Department of Transportation.