

House Resolution 1906

By: Representatives Benton of the 31st and Kidd of the 115th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Remembering the achievements of Benjamin Thomas Epps; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, Benjamin Thomas Epps, the father of Georgia aviation, was born in Oconee
3 County on February 20, 1888, and grew up in Athens, Georgia; and
- 4 WHEREAS, after briefly attending the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, he
5 returned to Athens, where in 1907 he opened an electrical contracting business and the town's
6 first automobile repair garage; and
- 7 WHEREAS, a curious, innovative man who had been greatly inspired by the exciting
8 developments of the Wright brothers in 1903, Mr. Epps is known to have been at work on
9 a flying machine as early as 1905, and in 1907, he made the first airplane flight in Georgia
10 at an open field in Athens; and
- 11 WHEREAS, he later befriended an aviator who had served in World War I, L. Monte Rolfe,
12 and together the two men established the Rolfe-Epps Flying Service in Athens, offering
13 aerial photography, passenger trips, and flight lessons; and
- 14 WHEREAS, Mr. Epps established the Epps Flying Field, which became Georgia's first
15 civilian airport and is today the site of the Athens-Ben Epps Airport; and
- 16 WHEREAS, from his first flight through the rest of his life, Mr. Epps continually worked on
17 aviation inventions, perfecting his aircraft through a great deal of trial and error, and in 1925
18 he debuted his Epps Light Monoplane, a small single-seat plane that foreshadowed the
19 successful Cub aircraft invented by William Piper in 1931; and
- 20 WHEREAS, a father of ten, Mr. Epps passed on his passion for flying to his children, and
21 his oldest son, Ben Epps, Jr., at the age of 13 became the youngest pilot to fly solo for his
22 time; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Epps died in a plane crash near Athens in 1937, leaving behind an
2 incredible legacy that continues to inspire aviators and inventors in Georgia and beyond.

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
4 the members of this body join in remembering the extraordinary achievements of Benjamin
5 Thomas Epps and recognize this legendary figure as the father of aviation in Georgia.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
7 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of Benjamin
8 Thomas Epps.