

Senate Resolution 300

By: Senators Brown of the 26th, Staton of the 18th and Mullis of the 53rd

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Celebrating the life of legendary impresario Phil Walden of Macon, Georgia, and offering
- 2 condolences on his passing; and for other purposes.

- 3 WHEREAS, impresario, music pioneer, and savvy businessman Phil Walden nurtured and
- 4 gave voice to hundreds of musicians who contributed to shaping America's music history,
- 5 from Southern rock to rhythm and blues to alternative rock; and

- 6 WHEREAS, born in Greenville, South Carolina, on January 11, 1940, the second of three
- 7 sons to Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Walden, Phil Walden came to Macon, Georgia, at the age of three,
- 8 planting his roots deep in this state's red clay; and

- 9 WHEREAS, after graduating from Lanier High School in 1958, Phil Walden enrolled at
- 10 Mercer University, and while a student, the charismatic and determined teen began his
- 11 legendary career in the music industry by booking emerging bands for fraternity parties
- 12 around Georgia; and

- 13 WHEREAS, in 1960, he opened the Phil Walden Artists and Promotions agency on Mulberry
- 14 Street in Macon, signing on a young Georgia artist named Otis Redding, who later had one
- 15 of the defining songs of the era, "(Sittin' on the) Dock of the Bay"; and

- 16 WHEREAS, a 1962 graduate of Mercer University, Phil Walden served his country with
- 17 honor, completing a tour of duty with the Adjutant General Corp of the United States Army,
- 18 where he rose to the rank of 1st Lieutenant; and

- 19 WHEREAS, over more than four decades, Phil Walden, through his Georgia based recording
- 20 companies Capricorn Records and Velocette Records, represented and produced some of the
- 21 hottest musical talent of the times, including renowned hit-makers Sam and Dave, Percy
- 22 Sledge, the Allman Brothers Band, the Marshall Tucker Band, the Dixie Dregs, Elvin
- 23 Bishop, Wet Willie, Widespread Panic, Cake, and 311, establishing Georgia as a haven for

1 Southern music that draws both musicians and music fans from around the world to Macon
2 and Atlanta; and

3 WHEREAS, through his friendships with and promotion of artists of diverse races, Phil
4 Walden broke down racial barriers during a time of segregation, allowing music to become
5 a common ground for understanding and relationship building that has spanned generations
6 of music fans, for which he was recognized with the 1977 Martin Luther King, Jr.,
7 Humanitarian Award and the 1978 American Jewish Committee Human Relations Award;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, the benefit concerts he planned for Georgia presidential candidate Jimmy Carter
10 are still talked about and played a significant role in Carter's successful campaign; and

11 WHEREAS, in addition to music, Phil Walden managed the careers of individuals who have
12 left their mark on television and film history, including comic actor Jim Varney, best known
13 for his character Ernest P. Worrell, and a then unknown actor and screenwriter named Billy
14 Bob Thornton, who would later be recognized for his award-winning work in the film
15 "Slingblade"; and

16 WHEREAS, Phil Walden was a dedicated citizen, providing leadership and support to civic
17 causes for the betterment of life in Macon and Georgia, including having served as campaign
18 chairman of the Macon Muscular Dystrophy Association, chairman of the Macon Heritage
19 Foundation, member of the In-Town Macon Neighborhood Association, board member of
20 the Brandywine Conservancy, and trustee of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and
21 the Atlanta Preservation Center; and

22 WHEREAS, valuing family and relationships, Phil Walden and his wife, Peggy, were
23 married for more than 35 years, and his children Philip, Jr., (a double graduate of Mercer
24 University) and Amantha both worked with their father in his company, Velocette Records;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, with his lifelong passion for music, his uncanny ability to recognize talent, and
27 his gift for promotion, Phil Walden made an indelible mark on music history and was a true
28 son of the South in preserving the notes and voices of some of Georgia's best artists, which
29 led to him being inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 1986 and to being named
30 one of the "100 Georgians to Shape the 20th Century" by *Georgia Trend* magazine in 2000.

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
2 celebrate the life of Phil Walden and honor his legacy of outstanding achievements in the
3 music industry and offer their condolences to his friends and family upon his passing.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
5 to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to the family of Phil Walden.