

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005**

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DRHJR60296-LG-147* (03/10)

Sponsors: Representative Coates.

Referred to:

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF JAMES
2 ALLEN "JIM" GRAHAM, FORMER STATE COMMISSIONER OF
3 AGRICULTURE.

4 Whereas, James Allen "Jim" Graham was born in Rowan County in the Town
5 of Cleveland on April 7, 1921, to James Turner and Laura Blanche Allen Graham; and

6 Whereas, Jim Graham graduated from Cleveland High School in 1938 and
7 North Carolina State College in 1942 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture
8 Education; and

9 Whereas, Jim Graham married Helen Ida Kirk, on October 30, 1942, and their
10 family later included two daughters, Alice Kirk Graham Underhill and Laura Constance
11 Graham Brooks, and seven grandchildren; and

12 Whereas, Jim Graham was employed as a teacher of vocational agriculture by
13 the Iredell County Schools from 1942 to 1945; and

14 Whereas, Jim Graham became Superintendent of the Upper Research Station
15 in 1946 in Laurel Springs, a position he held for six years; and

16 Whereas, Jim Graham held dual jobs during the period from 1952 to 1957,
17 serving as Manager of the Dixie Classic Fair in Winston-Salem and the first Secretary
18 of the North Carolina Hereford Breeders Association; and

19 Whereas, Jim Graham became Manager of the Raleigh Farmers Market in
20 1957 and continued in that position seven years; and

21 Whereas, Jim Graham was appointed Commissioner of Agriculture on July
22 19, 1964, by Governor Terry Sanford to fill the unexpired term of the late L.Y.
23 Ballentine; and

24 Whereas, Jim Graham was elected Commissioner of Agriculture in
25 November of 1964 and reelected eight times, serving nine four-year terms until his
26 retirement in 2000, when he became the longest serving State Commissioner of
27 Agriculture in the nation; and

1 Whereas, Jim Graham, at the time of his retirement, had served as
2 Commissioner for more than one-third of the entire existence of the Department since
3 its creation in 1876; and

4 Whereas, it was in this position of leadership that Jim Graham served North
5 Carolina so ably, directing North Carolina's modest farm economy that depended
6 largely on cash income from tobacco and textiles to a highly diversified agribusiness
7 community with receipts exceeding \$62 billion annually; and

8 Whereas, much of the success of agriculture during the last half century in
9 North Carolina is due to the persistent leadership of Jim Graham, whose own formula
10 for success was summarized by a plaque that he proudly kept in his office, "90%
11 Attitude and 10% Ability"; and

12 Whereas, Jim Graham, during his 58 years in public service served 11
13 Governors and countless legislators and witnessed an unprecedented growth and
14 prosperity for North Carolina's farm community; and

15 Whereas, Jim Graham was the recipient of many awards and honors, among
16 them: State 4-H Alumni Award, 1965; National 4-H Alumni Award, 1974; North
17 Carolina Yam Commission Distinguished Service Award; North Carolina Citizens
18 Association Distinguished Service Award, Man of the Year in North Carolina
19 Agriculture, 1969; National Future Farmers of America Distinguished Service Award,
20 1972; North Carolina Dairy Products Association Distinguished Service Award, 1981;
21 North Carolina Turkey Federal Association, Life Membership for Outstanding Service,
22 1982; North Carolina Apple Growers Association, Life Membership for Outstanding
23 Service, 1982; North Carolina Cooperative Council Outstanding Service to Rural
24 People Award, 1983; North Carolina Pork Producers Association Special Service
25 Award, 1983; North Carolina Poultry Federation Distinguished Service Award, 1983;
26 North Carolina Quarter Horse Association, Hall of Fame; Martin Litwack Award, North
27 Carolina State University's College of Veterinary Medicine; and North Carolina Pest
28 Control Association Award; and

29 Whereas, Jim Graham was named "Man of the Year" in January 1979 by
30 Progressive Farmer Magazine; and

31 Whereas, Jim Graham was chosen as the permanent Class President of the
32 Class of 1942 of North Carolina State University; and

33 Whereas, Jim Graham was an honorary member of the North Carolina
34 Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association, North Carolina Farm Writers
35 Association, State Future Farmers of America, North Carolina Food Dealers
36 Association, and North Carolina School Food Service Association; and

37 Whereas, Jim Graham was awarded the Watauga Medal on March 6, 2002,
38 by North Carolina State University's Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty for
39 his many contributions to the University, the State of North Carolina, agriculture, and
40 agribusiness; and

41 Whereas, Jim Graham received the first Dean's Distinguished Service to
42 Agriculture Award on November 2, 2003, from the College of Agriculture and Life
43 Sciences at North Carolina State University; and

1 Whereas, among Jim Graham's many achievements was research leading to
2 the eradication of the boll weevil, bovine brucellosis, hog cholera, and pseudorabies in
3 hogs, significant achievements that have led directly to the expansion of cotton and
4 livestock production; and

5 Whereas, while cotton had reigned as king in North Carolina during the early
6 1900s, it had declined to an insignificant crop by 1950, due to the boll weevil. With the
7 eradication of the boll weevil during the 1980s, cotton made a dramatic comeback, and
8 by 2000, the State's cotton crop totaled 1.43 million bales, shattering a previous high set
9 in 1926 by 221,000 bales. North Carolina continues today to be free of the boll weevil;
10 and

11 Whereas, due to the elimination of hog cholera and other animal diseases
12 along with Jim Graham's support of contract farming, the hog inventory increased from
13 just over one million hogs in the early 1940s to over 9.5 million, the greatest expansion
14 occurring since 1991; and

15 Whereas, during Jim Graham's 36-year tenure as Commissioner of
16 Agriculture, North Carolina farmers saw their cash income increase from \$1 billion to
17 \$8 billion annually; and

18 Whereas, North Carolina leads the nation today in the production of
19 flue-cured tobacco, sweet potatoes, and turkeys, is second in the nation in the
20 production of hogs and pigs, Christmas trees, cucumbers for pickles, and farm-raised
21 trout, is third in poultry and egg production, is fourth in bell peppers, broilers, peanuts,
22 greenhouse nursery products, and strawberries, and is fifth in blueberries, burley
23 tobacco, catfish, and snap beans; and

24 Whereas, as Commissioner of Agriculture, Jim Graham earned the respect of
25 his colleagues and peers throughout North Carolina and the nation for his knowledge,
26 his strength of character, and especially for his great sense of personal integrity; and

27 Whereas, Jim Graham was a person of indefatigable humor, always seeing
28 the best in others, appreciating the true character of the farmer. Once, meeting a farmer
29 with tobacco juice dripping from both sides of his mouth, Jim Graham commented,
30 "There goes a well-balanced man"; and

31 Whereas, Jim Graham was a longtime and devoted member of the First
32 Baptist Church in Raleigh, having served in many capacities, including deacon; and he
33 was a loyal member of the Kiwanis Club of Raleigh for many years; and

34 Whereas, Jim Graham died November 20, 2003, at the age of 82, but his
35 legacy continues with his daughters Alice and husband, Dr. T. Reed Underhill, of New
36 Bern, and Connie and husband, Leslie R. Brooks, of Nashville, Tennessee; and
37 grandchildren T. Reed Underhill, Jr., Laura Underhill, Graham Underhill, Berry Brooks,
38 Lauren Brooks, Allen Brooks, and Grace Brooks; and

39 Whereas, Jim Graham will be remembered by all who knew him as a man
40 who loved his job, was devoted to his family, church, community, State, and public
41 service; Now, therefore,

42 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

1 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of James Allen
2 Graham and expresses the appreciation and gratitude of this State and its citizens for his
3 life and service to the people of North Carolina.

4 **SECTION 2.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
5 resolution to the family of James Allen Graham.

6 **SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.