

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

**SESSION 2007
RATIFIED BILL**

**RESOLUTION 2007-43
HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1425**

A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF WILMA DYKEMAN, ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO APPALACHIAN LITERATURE.

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman was born on May 20, 1920, to Willard Dykeman and Bonnie Cole Dykeman and grew up in the Beaverdam community of Buncombe County; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman attended Biltmore Junior College and graduated from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where she received a BA degree in speech in 1940; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman married James R. Stokely, Jr., a poet and orchard grower from Newport, Tennessee, a few months after graduating from college; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman and her husband raised two sons and spent their time between homes in Asheville and Newport; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman had a career as an author, journalist, lecturer, educator, and historian; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman wrote 18 books and countless articles and essays, many of which reflected her passion for the Appalachian culture, conservation, social equality, and feminism; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman's first book, "The French Broad," published in 1955 as part of the "Rivers of America Series," explored cultural heritage and water conservation; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman cowrote three books with her husband, including "Neither Black Nor White," a 1957 publication that examined race relations in the South and, won the Sidney Hillman Award for the best book of the year on world peace, race relations, or civil liberties; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman's other works included "Tall Woman," "Return the Innocent Earth," and "The Far Family;" and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman wrote biographies of Will Alexander, Edna Rankin McKinnon, and W.D. Waterford and columns for many newspapers and magazines, including the Knoxville News-Sentinel, New York Times magazine, US News and World Report, and Reader's Digest; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman was affectionately known as the "First Lady of Appalachian Literature;" and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman taught for a number of years in the English Departments of Berea College in Kentucky and the University of Tennessee; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman enjoyed public speaking and gave as many as 75 lectures a year; and

Whereas, due to her extensive knowledge of Tennessee, Wilma Dykeman was appointed as Tennessee's State Historian in 1980 and served in that position for four years; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman received many accolades and awards over the years, receiving the Guggenheim Fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities Senior Fellowship, Chicago Friends of American Writers Award, North Carolina Gold Medal for Contribution to American Letters, Tennessee Outstanding Speaker of the

Year by State Association of Speech Arts Teachers and Professions, and the Distinguished Service Award from the University of North Carolina at Asheville; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman was awarded the Thomas Wolfe Memorial Trophy, an honorary doctorate from Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee, the North Carolina Award for Literature, the John Tyler Caldwell Award for the Humanities from the North Carolina Humanities Council, and the Zebulon B. Vance Award from Brevard College; and she was inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman found time to serve on the Board of Trustees of Berea College, the UNC Advisory Board, and the Great Smoky Mountains Advisory Board, and was a member of the Southern Historical Association; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman died on December 22, 2006, at the age of 86; and

Whereas, Wilma Dykeman is survived by her sons, Dykeman Stokely and James R. Stokely, and two grandchildren; Now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. The General Assembly honors the memory of Wilma Dykeman and expresses the appreciation of this State and its citizens for her life and her contributions to literature.

SECTION 2. The General Assembly extends its sincere sympathy to the family of Wilma Dykeman for the loss of a beloved family member.

SECTION 3. The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the family of Wilma Dykeman.

SECTION 4. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 18th day of June, 2007.

Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

Joe Hackney
Speaker of the House of Representatives