

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 156

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Regional Humanities Initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities be named for Eudora Welty.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 3, 2001

Mr. COCHRAN (for himself and Mr. LOTT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Regional Humanities Initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities be named for Eudora Welty.

Whereas Eudora Welty was the last of the 4 literary giants (William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, and Richard Wright) who shaped both the Southern Literary Renaissance and American literature in the 20th century;

Whereas this grand lady of American literature both embraced and transcended the South;

Whereas in the words of critic Maureen Howard, “It is not the South we find in her stories, it is Eudora Welty’s south, a region that feeds her imagination and a place we come to trust”;

Whereas critic Maureen Howard noted that Eudora Welty was “a Southerner as Chekhov was a Russian, because place provides them with a reality, a reality as difficult, mysterious, and impermanent as life”;

Whereas Eudora Welty’s literary legacy includes more than a dozen novels, collections of short stories, essays, and books of photography;

Whereas for this impressive literary canon Eudora Welty was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1973, the French Legion of Honor in 1996, the PEN/Malamud Award in 1992, 6 O’Henry Awards, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the National Endowment for the Humanities Frankel Medal, the National Book Critics Award, and the Gold Medal of the National Institute of Arts and Letters;

Whereas Eudora Welty was the first living writer to be included in the prestigious Library of America series that features American literary giants such as Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, Henry James, Willa Cather, Edith Wharton, Edgar Allan Poe, and William Faulkner;

Whereas 2 of Eudora Welty’s books, *The Robber Bridegroom* and *The Ponder Heart*, were adapted for the stage in New York;

Whereas the place in which Eudora Welty lived, Jackson, Mississippi, was central to her work as a writer;

Whereas Jackson, Mississippi was, in Eudora Welty’s words, “like a fire that never goes out”;

Whereas for Eudora Welty, place was “the stuff of fiction, as close to our living lives as the earth we can pick up and rub between our fingers, something we can feel and smell . . . We know what the place has made of these peo-

ple through generations. We have a sense of continuity and that, I think, comes from place.”;

Whereas no writer was ever more beloved, or more adored by her readers who avidly followed her life and work;

Whereas Eudora Welty deeply loved family stories and recalled how “Long before I wrote stories, I listened for stories . . . when their elders sit and begin, children are just waiting and hoping for one to come out, like a mouse from a hole.”;

Whereas Eudora Welty’s work focused on family life, including weddings, reunions, and funerals;

Whereas Eudora Welty’s career began with the study of region and place when she worked as a writer and photographer for the Works Progress Administration, work that later inspired her fiction and literary essays;

Whereas these writings help each of us better understand the humanities and their ties to region and place;

Whereas Eudora Welty’s work inspired the National Endowment for the Humanities to launch its Regional Humanities Initiative through 20 planning grants that have been awarded to institutions in the States of Arizona, California, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin;

Whereas like the gentle rain that fell across Mississippi on the day of Eudora Welty’s funeral, the Regional Humanities Initiative nourishes the soil of American culture and its roots in our regions;

Whereas the Regional Humanities Initiative honors the places from which we each come and preserves our history and culture for future generations; and

Whereas Eudora Welty believed deeply in the noble work of the Regional Humanities Initiative and her name will inspire future generations to understand and celebrate the places that shape our Nation: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that the
- 2 Regional Humanities Initiative be named for Eudora
- 3 Welty.

