

109TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 414

Recognizing and honoring the life achievements of Katherine Dunham for being one of the world's most respected dancers, a teacher, mentor, choreographer, author, actress, and humanitarian.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 23, 2006

Mr. CLAY (for himself and Mr. COSTELLO) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring the life achievements of Katherine Dunham for being one of the world's most respected dancers, a teacher, mentor, choreographer, author, actress, and humanitarian.

Whereas Katherine Dunham was born in 1909 in Chicago, Illinois, and began formal dance training in her late teens;

Whereas Katherine Dunham completed her bachelor's degree in social anthropology at the University of Chicago, was a pioneer in the use of folk and ethnic choreography, and was one of the founders of the anthropological dance movement;

Whereas Katherine Dunham was a dancer, choreographer, and director on Broadway, and was the first black choreographer at the Metropolitan Opera;

Whereas in the late 1930s, Katherine Dunham served as an inspiration to black artists by establishing her own dance school and touring company, the Katherine Dunham Dance Company, which was one of the first predominantly black dance troupes;

Whereas Katherine Dunham revolutionized American dance by incorporating the roots of black dance and ritual and making her choreography accessible to all through the Dunham Technique;

Whereas during the 1940s, the Katherine Dunham Dance Company toured in more than 60 countries;

Whereas in 1945, Katherine Dunham founded the Dunham School of Dance and Theatre in Manhattan, which provided a central location for students to immerse themselves in dance technique while also studying topics in the humanities, languages, ethics, philosophy, and drama;

Whereas in 1967, Katherine Dunham joined the faculty of Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, where she established a dance anthropology program and helped create the Performing Arts Training Center;

Whereas Katherine Dunham used her dance career and public status to draw attention to social injustices at home and abroad;

Whereas during World War II, Katherine Dunham successfully filed law suits against hotels in Cincinnati and Chicago for racial discrimination;

Whereas in 1964, Katherine Dunham was deeply moved by the poverty in East St. Louis, Illinois, and proposed an

education project that she hoped would reach far beyond dance and be concerned with the fundamentals of human society;

Whereas in 1969 Katherine Dunham created a community-based arts education program in East St. Louis, Illinois, called the Katherine Dunham Centers for Arts and Humanities, which enrolls at-risk youth in programs in fine, performing, and cultural arts;

Whereas the Katherine Dunham Center is the only multi-disciplinary arts organization in the St. Louis Metropolitan region devoted to the study, appreciation, and celebration of diverse cultures;

Whereas in 1993, Katherine Dunham went on a 47-day hunger strike at the age of 82 to protest the United States policy of deporting Haitian refugees and to call attention to the welfare of Haitians;

Whereas Katherine Dunham has received 10 honorary doctorates, the French Legion of Honor, Southern Cross of Brazil, Grand Cross of Haiti, NAACP Lifetime Achievement Award, Lincoln Academy Laureate, the Urban Leagues' Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Presidential Medal of Arts and has been inducted into the St. Louis Walk of Fame; and

Whereas Katherine Dunham died at the age of 96 while striving to continue giving hope to the poverty stricken community of East St. Louis, Illinois through her museum: Now, therefore, be it

- 1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
- 2 *concurring), That Congress recognizes Katherine*
- 3 *Dunham—*

1           (1) for being one of the world’s most respected  
2 dancers;

3           (2) for her work as a teacher, mentor, choreog-  
4 rapher, philosopher, author, and actress;

5           (3) for her dedication to improving the opportu-  
6 nities in the arts that are available to the Nation’s  
7 youth; and

8           (4) for her lifelong commitment to humani-  
9 tarian causes around the world.

