

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 277

Expressing the sense of Congress that Lena Horne should be recognized as one of the most outstanding American entertainers of the 20th century, who broke racial barriers and created opportunities for generations of African-American performers who followed in her footsteps.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 12, 2010

Mr. RANGEL submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that Lena Horne should be recognized as one of the most outstanding American entertainers of the 20th century, who broke racial barriers and created opportunities for generations of African-American performers who followed in her footsteps.

Whereas Lena Horne was born on June 30, 1917, in Brooklyn, New York;

Whereas she left school at the age of 14 and took her first job on the stage in order to help her family survive the Depression of the 1930s;

Whereas Horne began singing at Harlem's famed Cotton Club at age 16 and moved on to Broadway soon after;

Whereas Horne was 21 when she performed in her first musical film role, “The Duke is Tops”;

Whereas Lena Horne insisted on playing dignified characters that showcased her musical talent, refusing to be typecast in subservient roles normally reserved for Black actors;

Whereas Horne eventually signed with MGM studios, the first African-American to be signed to a long-term film contract;

Whereas she insisted on the stipulation that she would never be required to play a maid, only to find that she was edited out of films that were distributed in the South;

Whereas in 1943 Horne performed in two all-Black musicals, “Stormy Weather” and “Cabin in the Sky”, which are regarded as the premier performances of her career;

Whereas Lena Horne received a Special Tony Award in 1981 for her one-woman show “Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music” for which she still holds the record for the longest-running solo performance in Broadway history;

Whereas despite her fame and success, Lena Horne was committed to rectifying the social injustices of her time and was involved in political activism through organizations such as the National Council of Negro Women and the NAACP;

Whereas Lena Horne was a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc, and worked tirelessly with Eleanor Roosevelt to pass anti-lynching laws;

Whereas Horne performed during the historic 1963 civil rights March on Washington along with many noted artists, including Harry Belafonte, Mahalia Jackson, Marian Anderson, and Josephine Baker; and

Whereas Lena Horne represented the elegance and glamour of Hollywood, and at the same time the wisdom, strength, and determination of an entire generation of performers who struggled through racism and prejudice during the height of their careers: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that Lena
 3 Horne should be recognized for her achievements as one
 4 of the most outstanding American entertainers of the 20th
 5 century, for breaking racial barriers and creating opportu-
 6 nities for the generations of African-American performers
 7 who followed in her footsteps, for her contributions to the
 8 struggles for equality, and for using her celebrity as a cat-
 9 alyst for change.

