

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2009**

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DRHJR50056-LG-2A\* (7/22)**

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Sponsors: Representative Wray.

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Referred to:

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1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF THOMAS GHIO  
2 "SONNY BOY" JOYNER, WHILE JOINING THE CITIZENS OF WELDON IN  
3 RECOGNIZING THE TOWN AS THE ROCKFISH CAPITAL OF THE WORLD.

4 Whereas, in 1873, the United States Fish Commission (USFC) discovered that  
5 striped bass, known as rockfish, were good candidates for propagation and could help to restore  
6 the dwindling supply of fish used as a food source; and

7 Whereas, in 1938, the USFC opened the only known Rockfish Hatchery at that time  
8 in the Town of Weldon, which is located adjacent to the Roanoke River; and

9 Whereas, as a result of the hatchery, the rockfish population in the Town of Weldon  
10 increased significantly; and

11 Whereas, each year between the months of March and June, millions of rockfish  
12 migrate up the Roanoke River to spawn in the Town of Weldon; and

13 Whereas, the rockfish migration season attracts thousands of anglers and outdoors  
14 enthusiasts from around the world to the Town of Weldon; and

15 Whereas, various articles published in national newspapers and a film made by 20<sup>th</sup>  
16 Century Fox Film Corporation have documented the Town of Weldon's annual rockfish  
17 migration; and

18 Whereas, around 1947, area business leaders produced a brochure proclaiming  
19 Weldon as the Rockfish Capital of the World, a motto the Town has used for more than 60  
20 years; and

21 Whereas, the rockfish migration season enhances the economy of Weldon, attracting  
22 tourists to the Town and surrounding areas; and

23 Whereas, the late Thomas Ghio "Sonny Boy" Joyner, who lived in the nearby Town  
24 of Garysburg also located on the Roanoke River, was an ardent supporter of Weldon's being  
25 recognized as the Rockfish Capital of the World; and

26 Whereas, Sonny Boy Joyner was born in Northampton County and made a living  
27 farming peanuts in Northampton County and selling fertilizer in both Northampton and Halifax  
28 Counties; and

29 Whereas, Sonny Boy Joyner, who was the great grandson of Colonel Andrew  
30 Joyner, the first President to the North Carolina Senate, was active in State and local affairs,  
31 serving as Mayor of the Town of Garysburg, a Northampton County Commissioner, a  
32 campaign worker for many politicians, including former Governors W. Kerr Scott, Terry  
33 Sanford, Robert W. Scott, and James B. Hunt, Jr., and as a member of the State Boards of  
34 Agriculture and Transportation; and

35 Whereas, Sonny Boy Joyner tirelessly offered his time, resources, expertise,  
36 friendship, and support in service to the advancement of all people; and



1           Whereas, it is fitting to recognize rockfish as an important natural and economic  
2 resource in the Town of Weldon and to recognize those who have supported Weldon becoming  
3 the Rockfish Capital of the World; Now, therefore,

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

5           **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly joins the citizens of Weldon in recognizing  
6 the Town as the Rockfish Capital of the World.

7           **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Thomas Ghio "Sonny  
8 Boy" Joyner, an admired and respected leader in Northampton and Halifax Counties, and  
9 expresses the appreciation of this State and its citizens for his service to his communities.

10           **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this  
11 resolution to the Mayor of the Town of Weldon and the family of Thomas Ghio "Sonny Boy"  
12 Joyner.

13           **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.