

1 State of Arkansas
2 84th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2003

HR 1039

4
5 By: Representative King

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8 **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

9 TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE "SUNSHINE" SONNY
10 PAYNE ON HIS INDUCTION INTO THE 2003 ARKANSAS
11 TOURISM HALL OF FAME.

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13 **Subtitle**

14 TO RECOGNIZE AND CONGRATULATE
15 "SUNSHINE" SONNY PAYNE ON HIS INDUCTION
16 INTO THE 2003 ARKANSAS TOURISM HALL OF
17 FAME.

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19
20 WHEREAS, living legends are a rare breed, and we are fortunate to have
21 such a person as our next inductee into the Arkansas Tourism Hall of Fame;
22 and

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24 WHEREAS, at the age of fourteen (14), this legend got his start in 1941
25 working at an Arkansas radio station, the following year he became a part-
26 time announcer there, and in December 1942, in the midst of raging war in
27 Europe, this sixteen (16) year old joined the Army, where he served until
28 1948; and

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30 WHEREAS, after serving his country, he returned to his hometown of
31 Helena, to become the full-time announcer at KFFA 1360 AM, and in 1951, he
32 began hosting the "King Biscuit Time" blues radio show, and the legend of
33 "Sunshine" Sonny Payne began; and

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35 WHEREAS, today, "King Biscuit Time" is the longest-running daily blues
36 radio show in the world having aired since 1941, and has aired more times



1 than the “Grand Ole Opry”, and has outlasted “American Bandstand” by at least
2 a generation; and

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4 WHEREAS, during Sonny’s tenure, “King Biscuit Time” has been recognized
5 by the prestigious “George Foster Peabody Award” for outstanding achievement
6 in the field of radio and broadcast journalism, and originally featured other
7 living legends, including Sonny Boy Williamson and Robert Lockwood, Jr.,
8 playing live in the studio; and

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10 WHEREAS, Sonny, himself, has also won his fair share of awards for his
11 role in the show and for his other contributions to the blues having been
12 awarded the Blues Foundation’s “Keeping the Blues Alive” award for lifetime
13 service, and the Arkansas Broadcasters Association’s “Pioneer” award; and

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15 WHEREAS, in October of 2001, Helena’s Delta Cultural Center hosted
16 “Toasting a Legend: A Tribute to ‘Sunshine’ Sonny Payne”, where many of his
17 friends and renowned musicians such as Robert Lockwood, Jr., Pinetop Perkins,
18 Levon Helm, Little Milton, Sam Carr, Anson Funderburgh, Sam Myers, and many
19 others were on hand to celebrate Sonny’s contributions to blues music; and

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21 WHEREAS, the long-running radio show also played a big role in the
22 start of the King Biscuit Blues Festival, which will celebrate its eighteenth
23 (18th) year in October 2003, and during which big-time blues entertainers and
24 hordes of music fans descend on Helena; and

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26 WHEREAS, Sonny, a musician himself who has played bass with the likes
27 of Tex Ritter, Ted Williams, and others, continues to host the “King Biscuit
28 Time” show from 12:15 to 12:45 Monday through Friday in the Delta Cultural
29 Center’s Visitor’s Center in Helena, and was behind the microphone on May 24,
30 2002, when the “King Biscuit Time” show hit broadcast number 14,000; and

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32 WHEREAS, in 2003, “Sunshine” Sonny Payne was inducted into the Arkansas
33 Tourism Hall of Fame,

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35 NOW THEREFORE,
36 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-FOURTH GENERAL

1 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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That the Arkansas General Assembly wishes to recognize and congratulate "Sunshine" Sonny Payne on his induction into the Arkansas Tourism Hall of Fame and his lifelong legacy as a legend in Arkansas blues history.