

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

HMR 1006

4
5 By: Representatives Lendall, Ledbetter, Adams, Berry, Biggs, P. Bookout, Jackson, Borhauer, Dees,
6 Edwards, D. Evans, L. Evans, Haak, Jeffrey, C. Johnson, Jones, Judy, King, Lewellen, Mahony, Milligan,
7 Pate, Penix, L. Prater, Roebuck, Schulte, Stovall, Sullivan, C. Taylor, Thomason, Thyer, Walters, Elliott,
8 Bright, Hathorn, Creekmore, Medley, Pickett

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11 HOUSE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

12 MOURNING THE DEATH OF GEORGE FISHER AND HONORING
13 HIM AS A LEGENDARY POLITICAL CARTOONIST AND
14 SATIRIST.

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16 Subtitle

17 MOURNING THE DEATH OF GEORGE FISHER AND
18 HONORING HIM AS A LEGENDARY POLITICAL
19 CARTOONIST AND SATIRIST.

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22 WHEREAS, George Fisher, whose rustic cartoons about government and
23 politics attracted a multitude of Arkansas and national followers, died at
24 his home in Little Rock, Arkansas on December 15, 2003, at the age of 80; and

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26 WHEREAS, perhaps fittingly, Fisher died at his drawing board doing what
27 he loved after finishing his weekly cartoon for The Arkansas Times, and
28 another for the Christmas week issue; and

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30 WHEREAS, Fisher grew up in rural White County "too poor to have a
31 mother," in his words, where he was taught to think for himself, go
32 uncomplaining about his work, and treat everyone with honor; and

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34 WHEREAS, Fisher drew his first political cartoons for a junior-high
35 paper that he founded, and was first published in a 1944 cartoon about
36 Governor Homer Adkins claiming credit for wartime plants in Arkansas; and



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2 WHEREAS, Fisher, who joined the Army after a year at Beebe College,
3 kept a daily cartoon diary of his experiences as an infantryman in the Battle
4 of the Bulge, often drawing from his foxhole; and

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6 WHEREAS, Fisher, justly proud yet always humble about his wartime
7 service, recently donated the cartoon diary to the University of Arkansas
8 Archives, along with his other war memorabilia; and

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10 WHEREAS, while in England training for the World War II European
11 invasion and drawing cartoons for a regimental newspaper instituted to
12 improve morale, Fisher met his future wife, Rosemary Snook, whose nickname
13 "Snooky" he surreptitiously wove into nearly all of his cartoons; and

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15 WHEREAS, finding "Snooky" within Fisher's cartoons became a daily
16 pastime for some, almost an obsession for others; and

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18 WHEREAS, Fisher first became a regular newspaper cartoonist at age
19 forty (40) with The North Little Rock Times where editor Robert S. McCord
20 recognized his genius as a gifted artist with tremendous insight and humor;
21 and

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23 WHEREAS, when in 1964 Fisher's cartoons began appearing regularly in
24 The Arkansas Gazette, the oldest newspaper west of the Mississippi where he
25 would later become an institution, he developed a huge following; and

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27 WHEREAS, in the words of esteemed political writer Ernest Dumas,
28 Fisher, "the most influential social and political satirist in the state's
29 history," embarked upon a forty-year "mission he undertook unconsciously at
30 mid-life" to oppose "the tyrannies of greed, bigotry, and ignorance,
31 principally in the state of his birth, on the editorial pages of The North
32 Little Rock Times, The Arkansas Gazette, and finally The Arkansas Times;" and

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34 WHEREAS, Fisher came to symbolize to many the fearlessly liberal
35 editorial opinions of The Arkansas Gazette at a time when the Gazette
36 symbolized the best of Arkansas, and gracefully handled the responsibility;

1 and

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3 WHEREAS, in the words of former Senator David Pryor, Fisher "reached
4 into the depths of Arkansas values. He made us stop and laugh at ourselves.
5 He made us take our roles seriously. So many times he would sting me, but
6 still, the love I had for that man was deep and true. I think that applies
7 to about every politician in Arkansas. All of us felt a special kinship to
8 that man. He could see right through us."; and

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10 WHEREAS, what "set George apart was his love of Arkansas," according to
11 cartoonist John Deering, adding that Fisher voraciously studied Arkansas
12 history and folklore, employing his considerable knowledge in his cartoons,
13 but "was never mean for the sake of being mean," always using a scalpel while
14 others used sledgehammers; and

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16 WHEREAS, though acclaimed as one of the greatest cartoonists of the
17 20th century, Fisher resisted more money and the greater national recognition
18 from syndicating his cartoons because he wanted to address Arkansas issues
19 and doubted that national audiences would appreciate the rural Arkansas
20 metaphors that were the basis of much of his humor; and

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22 WHEREAS, Fisher's "Old Guard Rest Home," a mythical home of retired
23 Arkansas political "rascals" which began in the 1960's near the end of the
24 heyday of Fisher's greatest adversary, longtime Governor Orval Faubus, came
25 to be a source of pride to its residents although no kindness was shown to
26 their public lives; and

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28 WHEREAS, the Old Guard Rest Home has now sadly closed for good with the
29 death of its proprietor,

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31 NOW THEREFORE,

32 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-FOURTH GENERAL
33 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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35 THAT the House of Representatives mourns the passing of George Fisher,
36 and honors him as the most influential social and political satirist in

1 Arkansas history, and as a legendary cartoonist.
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