

1 State of Arkansas  
2 86th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2007  
4  
5 By: Representative Key  
6 By: Senator Womack  
7  
8

*As Engrossed: H3/15/07*

HCR 1038

9 **HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

10 HONORING ARKANSAS POET LAUREATE PEGGY CAUDLE  
11 VINING FOR HER POEM "ARKANSAS, THE NATURAL  
12 STATE".  
13

14 **Subtitle**

15 HONORING ARKANSAS POET LAUREATE PEGGY  
16 CAUDLE VINING FOR HER POEM "ARKANSAS,  
17 THE NATURAL STATE".  
18  
19

20 *WHEREAS, Arkansas Poet Laureate Peggy Caudle Vining has a master's*  
21 *degree in early childhood education; taught kindergarten in a public school;*  
22 *served as a private school director for ten (10) years; and for twenty-one*  
23 *(21) years served as Director of The Children's Center, a lab school for the*  
24 *Department of Education at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock; and*  
25

26 *WHEREAS, Ms. Vining is a published poet and author; for twelve (12)*  
27 *years she directed the Ozark Creative Writers Conference, and for two (2)*  
28 *years directed the fifty-six-year-old Arkansas Writers Conference and still*  
29 *serves on both boards; and served on the faculty of the first annual*  
30 *Christian Writers Conference in September 1998; and*  
31

32 *WHEREAS, Ms. Vining is past president of the National League of*  
33 *American Penwomen in Arkansas, the Poets Roundtable of Arkansas, and the*  
34 *Arkansas Songwriters Association; was founder of the Central Arkansas Chapter*  
35 *of the National Association of Education for Young Children; received a Point*  
36 *of Light Award and letter from President Bush for her volunteer work with*



1 cancer research technology and her work with children's organizations; four  
2 (4) Arkansas governors have cited her for her volunteer work with the  
3 literary arts in Arkansas; and she served thirteen (13) years as Literary  
4 Arts Director of the State Festival of Arts; and

5  
6 WHEREAS, Ms. Vining has been a member of American Mothers, Inc. (AMI),  
7 since 1981 when she was named Arkansas Mother of Merit; became Arkansas  
8 Mother of the Year in 1982, named by former Governor Clinton; and has been  
9 active in AMI since 1981 and has served on both local and national committees  
10 and currently serves on the AMI national board; and

11  
12 WHEREAS, the Arkansas Association of AMI was kept alive by Ms. Vining,  
13 as she acted as president for many years, literary arts chairman, art and  
14 vocal chairman, search chairman, counselor, and is presently serving as  
15 treasurer; and on the national AMI board she serves as area director of five  
16 (5) states; and

17  
18 WHEREAS, Ms. Vining is active in her church and has been teaching  
19 classes for four- and five-year-olds for many years and is presently a  
20 teacher in mission friends; and she face-paints for many fundraisers and uses  
21 her song-writing and story-telling skills with puppets to entertain children,  
22 both in her church and in the community; and

23  
24 WHEREAS, Ms. Vining is the author of the poem "Arkansas, The Natural  
25 State" that reads as follows:

26  
27 *Arkansas, The Natural State*

28  
29 *I stood today on top of Petit Jean*  
30 *And felt a kindredship to all I found,*  
31 *And I, intrigued by such a lovely scene,*  
32 *Was grateful for the beauties that abound.*  
33 *The spirit of a mountain miss was host,*  
34 *Her phantom figure hovered, light as wind,*  
35 *And I became enchanted by her ghost,*  
36 *As we stood on the ledge at river's bend.*

1 *I asked her of her legend and its truth;*  
2 *Of how she stowed away to sail from France,*  
3 *Of how she cropped her hair; became uncouth,*  
4 *To give her love and lover one more chance.*  
5 *"It is all truth; the future will proclaim*  
6 *My spirit guards this mount which bears my name."*  
7  
8 *Then, as we talked, my personage subdued,*  
9 *And I became, as Petit Jean, a ghost,*  
10 *And with uncanny knowledge I reviewed*  
11 *Historic deeds of others who could boast,*  
12 *Of coming to this great green state to live;*  
13 *To homestead and to plow their plots of land;*  
14 *To mine the hills; to hunt the woods and give*  
15 *Their very lives to make it far more grand.*  
16 *I spoke to men who also came to look*  
17 *For ways of life upon the river's road;*  
18 *They pushed their crafts to every shallow nook*  
19 *And rounded bends of hardship with each load.*  
20 *The Indians told me their tales of woe,*  
21 *Of how they battled as both friend and foe.*  
22  
23 *They told me how De Soto searched for gold*  
24 *And, trudging through the swamps to look for it,*  
25 *As upward, through the mountains and the cold,*  
26 *He traded with the natives, matching wit.*  
27 *La Salle then came to claim the Arkansas*  
28 *But left to join another group of men,*  
29 *De Tonty came to start, as did John Law,*  
30 *A river post where trading could begin.*  
31 *These men with whom I talked could really boast*  
32 *Of being first to settle on this land,*  
33 *Of fighting long and hard to save the Post*  
34 *Where then was housed the laws and all command.*  
35 *My spirit saw the past and lived it through,*  
36 *A vision of the old when it was new.*

1  
2 *As history passes, the seasons came in view,*  
3 *And time and space and beauty knew no date.*  
4 *I saw each month in its most brilliant hue*  
5 *And gazed at it as if I tempted fate.*  
6 *I looked at Spring and thought it surely best,*  
7 *For everywhere the land was newly green,*  
8 *The pristine white of dogwood seemed to test*  
9 *The worthiness and beauty of each scene.*  
10 *Then summer came with nesting meadowlarks,*  
11 *And I beheld the golden days of fun,*  
12 *As tourists came with camping gear to parks,*  
13 *And found their pleasures under shade and sun.*  
14 *I watched the summer visitors with awe,*  
15 *They loved this state of mine . . .this Arkansas.*  
16  
17 *Perhaps they liked spelunking in a cave,*  
18 *Or digging for a diamond at the mine,*  
19 *Or floating trips that made of them a slave*  
20 *To mountain streams, to setting out trotline.*  
21 *Perhaps they liked the baths at old Hot Springs,*  
22 *Or climbing under rushing waterfalls,*  
23 *Or smelling the sweet air that summer brings,*  
24 *Or listening to whippoorwills' faint calls.*  
25 *I think they surely liked the little creeks,*  
26 *That tumble down deep-set against tall bluffs.*  
27 *I think they liked the deer and quail that seeks*  
28 *New hideouts when invaders find their roughs.*  
29 *The eager tourists came to see our state*  
30 *Because the opportunities are great.*  
31  
32 *Then suddenly, as Autumn took her turn,*  
33 *The Ozark Hills became a brilliant hue.*  
34 *In blazing reds the forest seemed to burn*  
35 *Across the valleys, up the mountains too.*  
36 *In delta lands I saw vast cotton crops,*

1 *And harvest fields of rice, bowed down with grain.*  
2 *The short-leaf pines were green with heavy tops,*  
3 *And muscadines hung heavy down the lane.*  
4 *Then winter came attired in snowfall white,*  
5 *And lovely landscapes suddenly seemed bare.*  
6 *The prairie sky was filled with ducks in flight,*  
7 *And sounds of happy hunters filled the air.*  
8 *O Arkansas, which season is your best?*  
9 *Each one seems far more lovely than the rest.*

10  
11 *What makes you great? I wondered as I looked.*  
12 *Is it your timber, standing straight and tall?*  
13 *Is it your rivers wide and roughly crooked?*  
14 *Is it your lovely Ozarks in the fall?*  
15 *Is it your heritage that makes you grand,*  
16 *Your opportunities . . . yet still unknown?*  
17 *Is it your rich oil fields, or delta land*  
18 *That makes men proud to choose you for their own?*  
19 *O Arkansas, I see your very breath,*  
20 *In hazy clouds that skim your vast terrain.*  
21 *I know about your struggling with death*  
22 *And I have felt your birth with labored pain.*  
23 *O land of mine, I find you truly great,*  
24 *No wonder you are called "The Natural State",*

25 NOW THEREFORE,

26 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-SIXTH GENERAL  
27 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

29 THAT the House of Representatives recognizes and honors Arkansas Poet  
30 Laureate Peggy Caudle Vining for her poem "Arkansas, The Natural State".

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon adoption of this resolution, an  
33 appropriate copy shall be provided to Ms. Vining by the Chief Clerk of the  
34 House of Representatives.

36 /s/ Key