

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011**

**H**

**Simple  
Resolution  
Adopted**

**HOUSE RESOLUTION 608  
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/17/12  
Adopted 5/21/12**

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Sponsors:

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Referred to:

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April 5, 2011

1 A HOUSE RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF BERTHA "B"  
2 MERRILL HOLT.

3           Whereas, Bertha "B" Merrill Holt was born on August 16, 1916, in Eufaula,  
4 Alabama, to William H. Merrill and Bertha H. Moore Merrill; and

5           Whereas, B Holt earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and history in 1938 from  
6 Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia; and

7           Whereas, B Holt attended law school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel  
8 Hill from 1939 to 1940 and then transferred to the University of Alabama, where she received a  
9 law degree in 1941; and

10           Whereas, B Holt furthered her education by taking graduate courses at George  
11 Washington University; and

12           Whereas, during B Holt's early career, she worked as an attorney for the U.S.  
13 Treasury and the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C.; and

14           Whereas, B Holt met her future husband, W. Clary Holt, while working in  
15 Washington, D.C., and the two were married on March 14, 1942; and

16           Whereas, B Holt and her family moved to Burlington, North Carolina, in 1946,  
17 where she quickly became involved in her community; and

18           Whereas, B Holt became active in the local Democratic Party and, in 1975, was  
19 appointed to the North Carolina House of Representatives, becoming the first woman to  
20 represent the district; and

21           Whereas, B Holt served with honor and distinction in the House of Representatives  
22 for consecutive terms between 1975 and 1994; and

23           Whereas, B Holt provided exceptional service to her constituency and the General  
24 Assembly, serving as Cochair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety  
25 and as Vice-Chair of the Education Subcommittee on Preschool, Elementary, and Secondary  
26 Education, Judiciary I, and as a member of several other committees, including Constitutional  
27 Amendments and Referenda and Environment; and

28           Whereas, B Holt was appointed to a number of legislative study committees,  
29 including the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, Pest Control Study  
30 Committee, Computer Literacy Study Committee, Joint Commission on School Salary  
31 Schedules, Open Meetings Study Committee, and Inmate Substance Abuse Study Committee;  
32 and

33           Whereas, during her tenure in the General Assembly, B Holt led the successful  
34 effort to make marital rape a crime and fought for the State Abortion Fund because she



1 believed a woman's right to self-determination should not be limited by her economic status;  
2 and

3           Whereas, B Holt was a founding member of the Alamance Women's Political  
4 Caucus and the Women's Resource Center in Alamance County and was a lifetime member of  
5 the Democratic Women of Alamance County and the Senior Democrats of Alamance County;  
6 and

7           Whereas, in 1995 B Holt served as a member of the delegation to the Fourth United  
8 Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, China; and

9           Whereas, B Holt was a member of various organizations, including the North  
10 Carolina Bar Association, Pi Beta Phi, North Carolina Historical Society, Century Book Club,  
11 Down to Earth Garden Club, American Association of University Women, Task Force  
12 Community Based Alternative for State Offenders, and North Carolina Women's Forum; and

13           Whereas, B Holt served on a number of boards and commissions, including the Girl  
14 Scout Board, North Carolina School of Public Health Advisory Board, State Conference of  
15 Social Work, LIFE-Guardianship Council, ARC/NC, Advisory Board of the Alamance County  
16 Salvation Army, Advisory Board of the School Health Board, Board of Directors of the Snow  
17 Camp Historical Society, and Vice-Chair of the North Carolina State University Committee on  
18 Transportation; and

19           Whereas, as a great proponent of education, especially Civics and History, B Holt  
20 often talked to high school classes and adult groups about our State's laws and government; and

21           Whereas, B Holt received numerous honors and recognitions for her good deeds,  
22 including the Outstanding Alumna Award from Agnes Scott College in 1978, Legislative  
23 Award from the Nurses Association in 1979, Hospice of North Carolina Award in 1984,  
24 Legislative Award from the North Carolina Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation  
25 and Dance in 1984, Distinguished Service in Promoting School Health Education from the  
26 North Carolina Society for Public Health Education in 1986, Faith Active to Public Life Award  
27 by the North Carolina Council of Churches in 1987, and Distinguished Women's Award in  
28 Government from the North Carolina Council on the Status of Women in 1991; and

29           Whereas, B Holt was listed in Who's Who of American Women and Who's Who in  
30 America and received an honorary Doctor of Laws from Agnes Scott College in 2007; and

31           Whereas, B Holt was active in the Episcopal Church, serving as a member of the  
32 Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter in Burlington, President of the Episcopal Church  
33 Women of the Church of the Holy Comforter, High School Sunday school teacher, a member  
34 of the Diocesan Council of North Carolina Episcopal Diocese, Alternate Delegate to the  
35 Episcopal General Convention, Episcopal Diocesan Convention Delegate, and Episcopal  
36 Diocesan Convention President for the Burlington Council of Church Women; and

37           Whereas, B Holt held the distinction of becoming the first woman to serve on the  
38 Bishop's Standing Committee and the Church Vestry and was the first woman to serve as the  
39 Senior Warden of the Vestry of the Church of Holy Comforter; and

40           Whereas, B Holt died on June 19, 2010, at the age of 93; and

41           Whereas, B Holt is survived by a daughter, Harriet H. Whitley; sons, W. Merrill  
42 Holt and W. Jefferson Holt; grandchildren, Allyson Burroughs, Anna Blessington, Alexander  
43 Holt, William Holt, Croft Holt, and Christopher Holt; and great-grandchildren, Grace  
44 Burroughs, Lawson Burroughs, and Jack Blessington; Now, therefore,  
45 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

46           **SECTION 1.** The House of Representatives honors the memory of Bertha "B"  
47 Merrill Holt and expresses the appreciation of this State and its citizens for the service she  
48 rendered her community, State, and nation.

49           **SECTION 2.** The House of Representatives extends its sympathy to the family of  
50 Bertha "B" Merrill Holt for the loss of a beloved family member.

- 1           **SECTION 3.** The Principal Clerk shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution  
2 to the family of Bertha "B" Merrill Holt.  
3           **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon adoption.