

**ACTS AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA 2010**

Act 434

House Resolution 1513, Part XV

Effective May 24, 2010

**WILLIE LEE DUCKWORTH HIGHWAY — DESIGNATED.**

**A RESOLUTION**

Dedicating certain portions of the state highway system; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, Willie Lee Duckworth lived with his wife, Edna, in a blue house along Highway 242 as it edges east toward Riddleville and Bartow; and

WHEREAS, every couple of months, a special letter would travel the time-worn path to his door: a royalty check that made him feel like a king; and

WHEREAS, there were years when those checks brought more money than he made hauling pulpwood in Washington County, and the money helped put food on the table and buttons on his shirts; and

WHEREAS, in 1944, Willie Lee Duckworth, an unsuspecting buck private from Georgia, authored one of the most popular marching cadences in U.S. Army history; and

WHEREAS, at first, it simply was known as the "Duckworth Chant" but it later gained fame as "Sound Off":

Ain't no use in goin' home.  
Jody's got your gal and gone.  
Ain't no use in feelin' blue.  
Jody's got your sister, too.  
Sound off!  
One, two.  
Sound off!  
Three, four....

With those words, and others, Duckworth made the journey from foot soldier to footnote in military history; and

WHEREAS, "Sound Off" became the title of a song performed by big band leader Vaughn Monroe, and this year marks the 58th anniversary of the movie by the same name, starring Mickey Rooney; and

WHEREAS, although many folks in Washington County are aware of his contribution, the march of time has delivered a generation of others who know little or nothing about his serendipitous fame; and

WHEREAS, he was raised by his grandparents in a sharecropper's house not far from where he lived, and when he was drafted during World War II it was the first time he had been more than 100 miles from home; and

WHEREAS, on orders from a noncommissioned officer, he improvised his own drill for the nine African American soldiers in his unit, and soon all the ranks were buzzing and keeping rhythm; and

WHEREAS, "Sound Off" is still making noise with the blessings of the young soldier who dreamed it up, and it is only fitting and proper that this marching maestro be honored by the people of Georgia.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA, that the members of this body hereby join in offering its condolences to the family and friends of Willie Lee Duckworth upon his passing and in honoring him by designating the portion of SR-242 in Washington County, from SR-15, to the Jefferson County line, as the Willie Lee Duckworth Highway.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Transportation is authorized and directed to erect and maintain appropriate signs dedicating the road facilities named in this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized and directed to transmit appropriate copies of this Resolution to the Department of Transportation and the family of Willie Lee Duckworth.