

By Senator Jones

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Senate Resolution

1
2 A resolution recognizing Douglas Donn for his vision and
3 expertise in thoroughbred track development and his
4 leadership in many public service organizations in
5 Florida.

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7 WHEREAS, Douglas Donn's vision and expertise propelled
8 Gulfstream Park to one of the world's leading thoroughbred tracks
9 in the United States during his tenure as President and later as
10 Chairman of Gulfstream from 1978 until 2004, and

11 WHEREAS, Douglas Donn was the youngest chief executive
12 officer of a major thoroughbred track when at age 31 he assumed
13 the post at the Hallandale, Florida, track following the untimely
14 death of his father, Jimmy Donn, Jr., and

15 WHEREAS, under Douglas Donn's leadership, Gulfstream Park
16 attained exceptional gains in attendance, handle, and purse
17 distribution in an industry experiencing nationwide declines, and

18 WHEREAS, among the milestones achieved under Douglas Donn's
19 leadership were the emergence of Gulfstream as one of the world's
20 foremost racing centers and the winter home of choice for most
21 Triple Crown aspirants; the hosting of The Breeders' Cup, the
22 World Championship of Racing, in Florida for the first time at
23 Gulfstream in 1989, with repeat performances in 1992 and 1999;
24 and the establishment of the richest racing purse structure in
25 Florida's history, which attracted many of the nation's leading
26 owners, trainers, jockeys, and thoroughbreds to Gulfstream, and

27 WHEREAS, Douglas Donn also established the lowest take-out
28 rate in the State of Florida, ensuring larger payoffs for track
29 patrons; actively implemented aggressive and innovative

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30 marketing, public relations, customer services, better incentive
31 programs, and entertainment at Gulfstream; created "Family Days"
32 every weekend which headlined nationally featured bands, singers,
33 comedians, and specialty acts for children, resulting in
34 thousands of additional patrons to Gulfstream; guided Gulfstream
35 to state pari-mutuel handle records in every category; instituted
36 full-card simulcasting; developed a precedent-setting agreement
37 with the Florida Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association
38 to share pari-mutuels in Florida; and negotiated the annual
39 telecast of the Florida Derby, nationally recognized as a preview
40 to the Triple Crown, on ABC's Wide World of Sports, making
41 Gulfstream the first thoroughbred race track to gain that
42 distinction, and

43 WHEREAS, Douglas Donn has been honored for his outstanding
44 contributions to the industry by the Florida Horseman's
45 Benevolent and Protective Association; has been named "Horseman
46 of the Year" by the Florida Turf Writers Association and "Man of
47 the Year" by the Jockey Agents Benevolent Association; and was
48 also named "Businessman of the Year" in 1984 by the United
49 Cerebral Palsy Foundation, and

50 WHEREAS, Douglas Donn has provided a wide variety of public
51 service, including his roles as Member of the Board of Directors
52 of the Florida Chamber of Commerce, Past Chairman of the
53 Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, Past Chairman of the Broward
54 Forum, Past Director of the Broward Economic Development Board,
55 Past Chairman of the Downtown Hollywood Redevelopment Agency,
56 Past Chairman of the South Area United Way, Past Chairman of the
57 Hallandale Police Athletic League, and Board Member of the
58 Hallandale Chamber of Commerce, and

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59 WHEREAS, Douglas Donn graduated from Florida State
60 University with a degree in Marketing and served a tour of active
61 duty in the Marine Corps Reserves before beginning his Gulfstream
62 career, and, with his wife, Alice, is a resident of Ft.
63 Lauderdale, NOW, THEREFORE,

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65 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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67 That the Senate recognizes the many great contributions
68 Douglas Donn has made to the progress of thoroughbred racing in
69 Florida and to the support of essential public service
70 organizations that have significantly benefited Florida
71 communities and residents.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with
73 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Douglas Donn as a
74 tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.