

By Senator Hukill

14-02103E-18

20181934__

Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing December 15, 2018, as "Harry Tyson Moore and Harriette Vyda Simms Moore Day" in Florida.

WHEREAS, Harry Tyson Moore, born on November 18, 1905, and his wife, Harriette Vyda Simms Moore, born on June 19, 1902, were educators and civil rights activists, and

WHEREAS, in 1934, Harry Tyson Moore established the first Brevard County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and became its president, and

WHEREAS, the couple traveled throughout the state organizing branches of the NAACP, and, in 1941, Harry Tyson Moore organized and became president of the NAACP Florida State Conference, and

WHEREAS, in a quest for equal rights, Harry Tyson Moore investigated lynchings and police brutality, fought against laws obstructing people of color who sought to participate in our government by voting, and, in 1945, organized the Progressive Voters League, and

WHEREAS, during this time, the Moores succeeded in increasing the registration of black voters in Florida to 31 percent of those eligible to vote, markedly higher than in any other southern state, and

WHEREAS, in July 1949, after four young black men were falsely accused of raping a white woman in Groveland, a white mob went on a rampage through Groveland's black neighborhood, and the National Guard had to be called out to restore order,

14-02103E-18

20181934__

30 and

31 WHEREAS, after uncovering evidence that the "Groveland
32 Four" had been brutally beaten, Harry Tyson Moore publicly
33 accused notorious Lake County Sheriff Willis McCall of
34 orchestrating the beatings, and

35 WHEREAS, on November 6, 1951, while Sheriff McCall was
36 transporting two of the defendants, Walter Irvin and Sammy
37 Shepherd, back to Lake County for a retrial hearing, he shot
38 them, killing Shepherd and critically wounding Irvin, and

39 WHEREAS, Harry Tyson Moore organized a campaign against
40 what he saw as the wrongful convictions of the three surviving
41 men and worked with attorney Thurgood Marshall to successfully
42 appeal their convictions before the United States Supreme Court,
43 and

44 WHEREAS, on Christmas night 1951, the Moores' home in Mims,
45 Florida, was bombed, and Harry Tyson Moore died en route to a
46 hospital in Sanford, while Harriette Vyda Simms Moore clung to
47 life until after her husband's funeral, and she died January 3,
48 1952, and

49 WHEREAS, the protests over the Moores' deaths caused a
50 nationwide reaction, with dozens of rallies and memorial
51 meetings around the country, and President Truman and Florida
52 Governor Fuller Warren were inundated with telegrams and protest
53 letters, and

54 WHEREAS, Harry Tyson Moore and Harriette Vyda Simms Moore
55 were the first and only husband-and-wife civil rights activists
56 to be murdered during the civil rights movement, and

57 WHEREAS, Harry Tyson Moore and Harriette Vyda Simms Moore
58 were inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame, and

14-02103E-18

20181934__

59 their bravery, sacrifice, and achievements are recognized in the
60 Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and
61 Culture, and

62 WHEREAS, the legacy of Harry Tyson Moore and Harriette Vyda
63 Simms Moore is honored at Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore
64 Memorial Park, located at their homesite in Mims, Florida,
65 through the implementation of community outreach programs and
66 educational exhibits located inside the museum dedicated to the
67 couple and their sacrifice, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

70

71 That December 15, 2018, is recognized as "Harry Tyson Moore
72 and Harriette Vyda Simms Moore Day" in Florida.