

No. R-478. House concurrent resolution in memory of Vermont archivist, historian, and librarian Esther Munroe Swift.

(H.C.R.351)

Offered by: Representatives Taylor of Barre City, Buxton of Tunbridge, Clarkson of Woodstock, Devereux of Mount Holly, Hooper of Montpelier, Jerman of Essex, Kitzmiller of Montpelier, Lewis of Berlin, Marek of Newfane, Sharpe of Bristol and Stevens of Shoreham

Offered by: Senators Campbell, Cummings, Doyle, McCormack, Nitka and Pollina

Whereas, few persons explored and wrote of the heritage of our state with greater depth and knowledge than Esther Swift of South Royalton, and

Whereas, her remarkable career which took her around the world was undeniably anchored in the Green Mountain State, as she was a proud sixth-generation Vermonter, and

Whereas, after growing up in Montpelier, Esther Swift entered the University of Vermont (UVM) and then proceed to earn degrees from Columbia University, the University of Utah, and ultimately a doctorate from the University of Chicago, and

Whereas, in the 1940s, Esther Swift became the regional librarian for the Free Public Library Commission of Vermont, and

Whereas, for the United Nations, she developed libraries in remote corners of the world, and independently helped a number of international students attend college in the United States, and

Whereas, after her United Nations tenure, Esther Swift joined the staff of the Rockefeller Foundation before returning home to Vermont, and

Whereas, for nearly 20 years, Esther Swift served as the superb librarian and archivist at the Billings Farm and Museum, curating the organization's Vermontonia collection and working with visiting researchers, and

Whereas, Esther Swift contributed to the literature of Vermont history, and especially noteworthy is her *Vermont Place-Names: Footprints of History*, recognized by Vermont historians as a truly seminal reference work, and

Whereas, the book's genesis was Esther Swift's curiosity about how Vermont's place-names had evolved, and with the assistance of her son, she traveled the state for a dozen years, gathering material, initially with no intent of publishing a book until a publisher convinced her of the work's importance, and the first printing, of which four have since followed, sold out before the presses had even begun to roll, and

Whereas, a resident for many years of South Royalton, she owned and meticulously restored the house owned by General Elias Stevens, the hero of the Royalton Raid of 1780, and

Whereas, as a lister in South Royalton, Esther Swift made a contemporary contribution to Vermont municipal administration, designing the first computer program for listers, and

Whereas, in recognition of her enduring contribution to Vermont historical scholarship, in 2007, the Center for Research on Vermont most fittingly presented her with its Lifetime Achievement Award, and into in her 80s,

Esther Swift continued her significant role in Vermont's historic preservation through her archiving of the UVM Landscape Change website, and

Whereas, after an extraordinarily productive life of cataloguing our state's history, and spreading the world of knowledge and the wonders of libraries to readers around the world, Esther Swift died peacefully on March 10 in her South Royalton home at the age of 89, and her survivors include her son, Brian, and daughter-in-law, Bonnie, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren, now therefore be it:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly extends sincere condolences to the family of Esther Munroe Swift in appreciation for her contribution to our state's heritage, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Brian Swift in Berlin.