

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.C.R. 10
By: Seliger
Administration
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Accomplished Texans who serve as positive role models for young people deserve special recognition, and Mary Ann "Molly" Goodnight, Armstrong County pioneer and wife of Charles Goodnight, embodied the strength and spirit that has made Texas an enduring example to the rest of the country.

Molly Goodnight was born September 12, 1839, in Madison County, Tennessee. She moved with her family to Fort Belknap, Texas, in 1854. After the death of her parents, she worked as a schoolteacher and took care of her five brothers.

She met Charles Goodnight in the mid-1860s, and they married in 1870. The couple settled in Pueblo, Colorado, where Charles had already established a ranch. Drought and the Panic of 1873 caused the family to return to Texas, where Charles received backing from Irish investor John George Adair, who became his partner.

The Goodnights founded a ranch in the Texas Panhandle based in Palo Duro Canyon. Molly became doctor, nurse, spiritual comforter, sister, and mother to the ranch hands who worked there, but her most important role was wife and helpmate to the most famous rancher on the High Plains.

She became interested in the plight of the baby bison left behind by the commercial hunters who had ravaged the great bison herds that roamed the Plains. Recognizing that the extinction of the bison was imminent, she encouraged her husband to establish the Goodnight bison herd, which has since become the Official State Bison Herd of Texas and is now located at Caprock Canyons State Park.

Known as the Mother of the Panhandle of Texas, Molly helped establish Goodnight College, and the town of Goodnight is named in honor of her and her husband. Molly died in 1926, and her headstone reads "Mary Ann Dyer Goodnight, One who spent her whole life in the service of others." She is truly deserving of this signal honor for her pioneering work alongside her husband and her visionary efforts to save the bison.

RESOLVED

That the 83rd Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate September 12 of each year from 2013 through 2022 as Mary Ann "Molly" Goodnight Day in honor of her work in saving the herd of Texas Plains bison that is now the Official State Bison Herd of Texas.

That a copy of this resolution be prepared in honor of the life and legacy of Mary Ann "Molly" Goodnight.