

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

S.C.R. 62  
By: Hughes  
Committee To Be Determined | Never Referred  
6/21/2019  
Enrolled

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Residents of Texarkana lost an admired civic leader with the passing of Martha Leah Williams Morriss on April 6, 2019, at the age of 92.

The daughter of Jeffie and Isaac Williams, the former Martha Williams was born in Mount Pleasant on June 13, 1926, and grew up with two brothers, Bill and Jim. Her family moved to Texarkana when she was 10, and after graduating from Texas High School, she completed her bachelor's degree in mathematics at Randolph-Macon Woman's College. On December 31, 1948, she married Joshua Rutland Morriss Jr., and they were blessed with three sons, Josh, Don, and William.

Mrs. Morriss gave back to her fellow citizens through her support for many worthwhile organizations. She served as president of the Junior League of Texarkana, and she was instrumental in the founding of the Texarkana Regional Arts and Humanities Council. In addition, she generously shared her time and talents with the Texarkana Symphony Orchestra, the Literary Council of Bowie and Miller Counties, and numerous educational endeavors. Widely admired for her contributions to the cultural scene, she was appointed to the Texas Commission on the Arts. Together with her husband, she also played a key role in the establishment of MRC Cornerstone Retirement Community.

The Texarkana Independent School District recognized Mr. and Mrs. Morriss for their exceptional efforts in behalf of education by naming the Martha and Josh Morriss Mathematics & Engineering Elementary School in their honor. Moreover, in 2015 the district named the couple Distinguished Alumni and acknowledged Mrs. Morriss for her education advocacy and her work to benefit the TRAHC ArtSmart program, which brings the arts to schools. Over the years, she was the recipient of myriad other accolades, including the C. E. Palmer Award for community service from the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce.

For more than a half century, Mrs. Morriss taught the Fellowship Sunday school class at Williams Memorial United Methodist Church, and every summer, she organized Bible Storytime for Vacation Bible School. She served on the Perkins School of Theology Executive Board, and she and Mr. Morriss delivered Holy Communion to shut-ins together as well.

Martha Morriss lived a rich and purposeful life centered on her family, her faith, and her community, and she will long be remembered with deep affection by all who knew her.

### **RESOLVED**

That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas pay tribute to the memory of Martha Leah Williams Morriss and extend sincere sympathy to the members of her family; to her husband, Josh Morriss Jr.; to her sons, Josh Morriss III and his wife, Diana, Don Morriss and his wife, Patsy, and William Morriss and his wife, Rita; to her grandchildren, Meredith and David Farren, Susannah and Daniel Linnett, Marjorie and Chad Matthews, Allison and Brady Wright, Whitney and Ross Ormond, Melanie and Ben Tkach, and Brad and Goodwin McCutcheon; to her 15 great-grandchildren; to her special niece, Joan Baldrige-Ballard; and to her other relatives and friends.

That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for her family and that when the Texas House and Senate adjourn this day, they do so in memory of Martha Leah Williams Morriss.