



RYAN GUILLEN
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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
COREY.TICKNOR@HOUSE.TEXAS.GOV

GUILLEN BILL COMMEMORATES TEXAS MUSIC LEGEND

Duval County Highway to be Dedicated as Al Dean Memorial Highway

AUSTIN - Early this session, State Representative Ryan Guillen (D—Rural South Texas) filed HB 3283 which designates a portion of State Highway 16 in Duval County as Al Dean Memorial Highway, after the late Texas music legend.

"Designating a section of State Highway 16 as the Al Dean Memorial Highway would honor Al's upstanding contributions to his community and Texas' music culture," stated Guillen.

Al Dean's career started in 1952, when he formed his first band, "The Texas Teenagers," in Freer Texas. Al and his original band were known for playing dances, school functions and benefits all over South Texas, and in the late 1950s he began recording some of his hit rockabilly singles.

In 1967, Al entered stardom with a well-known fiddle tune titled "Cotton Eyed Joe" for KIKR Records. The original song dates back to earlier performers and was first recorded in 1941 by both Adolph Hofner and Bob Wills. Al Dean's instrumental version of the song inspired a new polka dance for couples and became a huge Texas and regional hit in bars, clubs and dance halls and spread from the southwest to all over the United States.

Radio stations played Al's tune before network news breaks, and Cotton Eyed Joe was even played during breaks of the San Antonio Spurs basketball games, as well as during the 7th inning stretch of the Texas Rangers home baseball games for the last 33 years. In 1987, the American Music Association of Texas awarded Dean for having the most programmed record in the history of the jukebox.

Al Dean, "Mr. Cotton Eyed Joe," passed away on October 3, 2016 in San Antonio, Texas, at the age of 85. HB 3283 seeks to commemorate Al Dean's illustrious musical career by designating a portion of State Highway 16 in Duval County as the Al Dean Memorial Highway.

"I am proud to honor any individual making a positive contribution to the communities of South Texas," said Guillen. "Al Dean left behind a rich musical legacy and by designating a portion of State Highway 16 in Freer as the Al Dean Memorial Highway we will continue to remember his legacy."

HB 3283 was reported engrossed in the Texas House on **Thursday, April 27**, and is currently awaiting action in the Texas Senate.

Representative Ryan Guillen serves ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, including Atascosa, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Starr, and Willacy.

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