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Summary: Donald Clayton Death

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

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View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=1294&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[04/25/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/1294_20240425.docx)

A senate RESOLUTION

TO EXPRESS PROFOUND SORROW UPON THE PASSING OF Dr. Donald D. Clayton AND TO EXTEND THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS.

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Donald D. Clayton on January 3, 2024. He was honored with a memorial service on March 16, 2024; and

Whereas, a native of Shenandoah, Iowa, Dr. Clayton was born on March 18, 1935 to parents Delbert and Avis (Kemberry) Clayton; and

Whereas, Dr. Clayton graduated with unparalleled distinction from Southern Methodist University in 1956. His desire for a deeper understanding of the cosmos led him to the prestigious California Institute of Technology, where he earned his Ph.D. under the mentorship of Nobel Laureate William Alfred Fowler in 1961. This collaboration paved the way for Dr. Clayton's subsequent scientific career, redefining our comprehension of the vast universe we inhabit; and

Whereas, in 1963, Dr. Clayton became one of the founding faculty members of Rice University's Department of Space Science. This coincided with the excitement surrounding NASA's Apollo Program, and Dr. Clayton played a crucial role in shaping the department's course offerings. Notably, he initiated a graduate‑student course on nuclear reactions in stars, an endeavor that laid the foundation for his textbook, which was published in 1968 and continues to influence and inspire aspiring astrophysicists worldwide; and

Whereas, Dr. Clayton's academic leadership at Rice University earned him the prestigious Andrew Hays Buchanan Professorship of Astrophysics in 1968, a position he diligently held for two decades. He spent seven years affiliated with esteemed institutions such as the University of Cambridge and Heidelberg University, and he also enjoyed visiting positions in Cardiff, United Kingdom, and embarked on sabbatical leaves at Cambridge, Heidelberg, and Durham University; and

Whereas, from 1977 to 1984, Dr. Clayton divided his time between teaching at Rice University in Houston, Texas and conducting research at the Max Planck Institute for Nuclear Physics in Heidelberg. During this period, his groundbreaking work on stardust, cosmic chemical memory, and the survival rates of refractory stardust earned him the Leonard Medal in 1991; and

Whereas, in 1989, Dr. Clayton accepted a professorship at Clemson University, where he played an instrumental role in establishing a cutting‑edge graduate research program in astrophysics. His dedication and research spanned to projects such as the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory, where his predictions regarding radioactive nuclei in supernova remnants were confirmed; and

Whereas, after his official retirement in 2007, Dr. Clayton remained an active force in the field, with a particular focus on the condensation of dust within supernovae. Notably, he assembled a comprehensive web‑based photo archive detailing the history of nuclear astrophysics and chronicling his own contributions from 1990 through 2014; and

Whereas, beyond his scholarly contributions, Dr. Clayton's love for astrophysics transcended traditional academic boundaries. He authored several books, including a novel as well as a science autobiography. These literary works showcased his passion for making complex astrophysical concepts accessible to a broader audience, solidifying his influence beyond the academic sphere; and

Whereas, Dr. Clayton was preceded in death by his parents; his son, Devon Clayton; his brother, Keith Clayton; and his sister, Carolyn Ratliff; and

Whereas, Dr. Clayton leaves to cherish his memory his beloved spouse Nancy (McBride) Clayton; his children, Donald Clayton (Katie), Alia Fisher (Wyatt), and Andrew Clayton (Marie); seven cherished grandchildren; and his sister Barbara Avery. He will be greatly missed. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, express profound sorrow upon the passing of Dr. Donald D. Clayton and extend the deepest sympathy to his family and many friends.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Dr. Donald D. Clayton.

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