State of North Carolina

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

DOLLY PARTON'S THE IMAGINATION LIBRARY DAY OF READING

2026

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Dolly Parton, born in Locust Ridge in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, grew up in a large, working-class family whose love, resourcefulness, and storytelling traditions shaped her artistic spirit; and

WHEREAS, from an early age, Parton displayed exceptional musical talent – writing songs as a child, performing on local radio, and eventually moving to Nashville the day after her high school graduation – and she built a history marked by perseverance, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to using her gifts to uplift others; and

WHEREAS, Parton emerged in American music and entertainment, achieving breakthrough success with legendary songs such as "Jolene" and "I Will Always Love You," establishing herself as a trailblazing artist in country music, and further elevating her cultural impact through celebrated film performances – most notably her acclaimed role in the 1980 classic "9 to 5"; and

WHEREAS, the Imagination Library was created as a flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation with the mission to be "an inspiration to all children to Dream More, Learn More, Care More, Be More"; and the reading program has gifted more than 300 million books to nearly 3.2 million children in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Republic of Ireland; and

WHEREAS, outside of Parton's home state of Tennessee, North Carolina proudly became the first state to expand the Imagination Library statewide, ensuring that young children in all 100 counties have access to early literacy resources that will inspire children's love for books; and nearly 25 million books have been delivered to children across the state; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Partnership for Children, through Smart Start, has been instrumental in supporting the statewide expansion of the Imagination Library, working collaboratively with local partnerships, families, and community leaders to advance early childhood development and literacy; and North Carolina state lawmakers included $3.5 million in the first year of the budget and $12 million in this year's budget, signed into law this summer by Governor Josh Stein; and

WHEREAS, in addition to Dolly Parton's many humanitarian acts, Parton also generously supported people who were suffering in the wake of Hurricane Helene by giving more than $2 million for recovery efforts in 2024, demonstrating her continual compassion and commitment to helping communities in times of need; and

WHEREAS, the State of North Carolina celebrates the life of Dolly Parton with a day of reading to honor her artistic talents, her humanity, and her legacy of fostering a love of reading for all children;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSH STEIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim September 25, 2026, as **"DOLLY PARTON'S THE IMAGINATION LIBRARY DAY OF READING"** in North Carolina and commend its observance.

JOSH STEIN
Governor

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this fourteenth day of September in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-sixth and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifty-first.