

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

April 29, 2015

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.  
Room 3300  
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in support of the issuance of a United States "Forever" postage stamp to honor Ms. Ava Gardner for her legacy as an international film legend and for the pride in which she had for her North Carolina background. Chosen by the American Film Institute (AFI) as one of the 25 greatest American female screen legends of all time, Ms. Gardner remains a symbol of North Carolina—and Southern—success.

Ava Lavinia Gardner was born in Grabtown, a rural community seven miles east of Smithfield, North Carolina. As a young child, she helped her mother manage a boarding house for teachers in the Rock Ridge community near Wilson, North Carolina. In 1941, at the age of 18, Ms. Gardner signed a seven-year movie contract with MGM studios, and in 1950 MGM chose her over several screen legends to portray the role of Julie Laverne in *Show Boat*, one of the greatest musicals of all time.

The capstone in her career came in 1953 when she received a Best Actress Academy Award nomination for her role as "Honey Bear" Kelly in the film, *Mogambo*. Additional awards include the Best Actress Award at the 1964 San Sebastián International Film Festival for her portrayal in *The Night of the Iguana*, a nomination for a Golden Globes, three BAFTA awards, and a Laurel Awards. Her Star can be found on the Walk of Fame in Hollywood, California.

Though living in Europe during the latter years of her life, Ms. Gardner never forgot her home and returned to Smithfield to visit her family often. She remained civic minded and became a lifelong member of the NAACP in 1968. She insisted that her collection belong to her home state, and as evidence of her loyalty and affection for her hometown she chose to be buried in Smithfield.

If she were to be posthumously honored in this way, she would join other great women Hollywood legends who have received stamps, including Marilyn Monroe, Lucille Ball, Audrey Hepburn, Judy Garland, Bette Davis and Katharine Hepburn.

I would appreciate your consideration of this great honor for Ms. Ava Gardner.

Sincerely,

