

By: Cole

H.R. No. 88

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Residents of Austin lost an admired philanthropist,
2 arts advocate, and civil rights activist with the death of Ada
3 Cecilia Collins Anderson on June 2, 2021, at the age of 99; and

4 WHEREAS, The daughter of Walter and Cecilia Collins, the
5 former Ada Collins was born in Pilot Knob on October 2, 1921, and
6 grew up as the fourth of nine children; she attended Pilot Knob
7 Elementary School, founded by her paternal grandfather, and went on
8 to graduate from L. C. Anderson High School in Austin; after
9 receiving her bachelor's degree in home economics from
10 Huston-Tillotson University, she became the first African American
11 to enroll in The University of Texas at Austin Graduate School of
12 Library Science, and although she completed her coursework, the
13 segregated Texas State Library refused to give her a field
14 placement, and she was denied her diploma; she was employed as a
15 counselor by the Texas Employment Commission and strove to improve
16 pay and conditions for African American domestic workers; later,
17 she taught in the Austin Independent School District, earned a
18 master's degree in educational psychology, and became a
19 psychometrist; in addition, she was a partner in Anderson Wormley
20 Real Estate and Insurance Company, established by her husband,
21 Marcellus J. "Andy" Anderson, with her assistance; and

22 WHEREAS, The Andersons married during World War II and became
23 the parents of two treasured children, Sandra and Marcellus,
24 nicknamed "Jack"; benefiting youth of color, Mrs. Anderson helped

1 found the Austin chapter of Jack and Jill of America, and she served
2 the organization in such offices as regional director and national
3 corresponding secretary; she organized a successful boycott of a
4 Whites-only skating rink in East Austin and then formed the Austin
5 Human Relations Commission, a coalition of pastors, professors, and
6 others determined to end segregation; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1982, Mrs. Anderson became the first African
8 American to win a countywide election in the Texas capital when she
9 joined the board of Austin Community College; committed to
10 education and the arts, she organized and directed the Leadership
11 Enrichment Arts Program for underserved youngsters; she co-chaired
12 the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force for the Austin Independent
13 School District and served on the board of Laguna Gloria Art Museum;
14 at the behest of her friend, Lady Bird Johnson, she facilitated two
15 exhibitions of African American art at the LBJ Library and Museum;
16 she was also a founding member of the Austin Lyric Opera and served
17 on gubernatorial commissions; breaking yet another barrier, she
18 became the first African American woman to sit on a bank board in
19 Austin; and

20 WHEREAS, Dedicated to their community, the Andersons helped
21 provide affordable housing for African Americans; they were active
22 in the Democratic Party at the local, state, and national levels and
23 became personal friends of Governor John Connally and President
24 Lyndon Baines Johnson; Mrs. Anderson coordinated voter
25 registration and mobilization drives that got thousands across
26 Texas to the polls; in addition, the Andersons were both involved in
27 Masonry and a host of civic issues; the couple shared a fulfilling

1 relationship of 61 years before Mr. Anderson's passing;
2 Mrs. Anderson was also preceded in death by both her children; in
3 memory of her daughter, she donated \$3 million to Huston-Tillotson
4 University, the largest gift in its history, for the Sandra Joy
5 Anderson Community Health and Wellness Center; and

6 WHEREAS, Mrs. Anderson was the recipient of myriad
7 accolades, including an honorary doctorate from Huston-Tillotson
8 and the Community Legacy Award and Distinguished Alumnus Award from
9 UT; moreover, UT's Briscoe Center holds a collection of her and her
10 husband's papers; she was inducted into both the African American
11 Women's Hall of Fame and the Texas Black Women's Hall of Fame; and

12 WHEREAS, Through her trailblazing achievements and numerous
13 civic contributions, Ada Anderson made a lasting, positive
14 difference in her community, and her legacy will continue to
15 resonate in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas
17 Legislature, 2nd Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the life of
18 Ada Cecilia Collins Anderson and extend sincere condolences to all
19 who mourn her passing; and, be it further

20 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
21 prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of
22 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Ada Cecilia
23 Collins Anderson.