

By: Kacal

H.R. No. 1768

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The iconic Cafe Texan in Huntsville is reopening in  
2 May 2023 as the Cafe Texan History Museum and Library; and

3 WHEREAS, In April 1936, the cafe's imminent opening was  
4 front-page news in *The Huntsville Item*; founder Fred Morris was an  
5 experienced restaurateur, and he snagged an ideal location in the  
6 former United Gas Company office in the art deco Eastham Building,  
7 on the downtown square across from the Walker County Courthouse;  
8 for decades, the cafe was a favorite meeting place for business  
9 owners, old-timers, Sam Houston State University students, and  
10 others in the community; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Morris ran the Cafe Texan until 1958, and after  
12 that, it passed through a number of hands; by 1996, the business was  
13 flailing, but one of the regulars, U.S. Army veteran John  
14 Strickland, purchased the cafe and helped turn things around; he  
15 earned the loyalty of employees by paying them fairly and treating  
16 them well, and many worked there for decades; in addition, he gained  
17 the appreciation of the community through his support of numerous  
18 worthy causes and organizations; and

19 WHEREAS, Patrons enjoyed the comfort of the familiar decor,  
20 with the original counters, stools, and pressed-tin ceiling; the  
21 menu remained fairly constant through the years, with chicken-fried  
22 steak and pepper steak the perennial customer favorites; in later  
23 years, the Texan became known for diner-style breakfasts and hearty  
24 lunch specials such as fried chicken and catfish; and

1           WHEREAS, Like many other businesses, the Texan shut down at  
2 the height of the COVID-19 pandemic; when Mr. Strickland began to  
3 contemplate reopening, he discovered that the old place would  
4 require an enormous investment to bring it up to current codes; he  
5 sold the restaurant to former city council member and mayor pro tem  
6 Vance Howard and his wife, Karen; the couple has renovated the  
7 building extensively, turning it into a combination upscale eatery  
8 and museum for their enormous collection of antiques and artifacts,  
9 from pistols owned by the Emperor Napoleon and letters written by  
10 President George Washington to a rare geological map of Texas; they  
11 intend to run the restaurant as a nonprofit benefiting local  
12 charities and scholarship programs; and

13           WHEREAS, Renowned as one of the state's oldest cafes, the  
14 Cafe Texan has been a cornerstone of the Huntsville community for  
15 generations, and its return is sure to gladden the hearts of  
16 countless area residents; now, therefore, be it

17           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas  
18 Legislature hereby congratulate the Cafe Texan on its reopening and  
19 extend to all those associated with this venerable establishment  
20 sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

21           RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
22 prepared for the cafe as an expression of high regard by the Texas  
23 House of Representatives.