

By: Harper-Brown

H.C.R. No. 13

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The passing of Jackie Mae Howard Townsell on October
2 17, 2002, at the age of 66, has brought a profoundly felt loss to the
3 many friends and admirers of this former Irving city councilwoman,
4 whose achievements as a civil rights leader, community advocate,
5 and public official will long be remembered; and

6 WHEREAS, A resident of the Bear Creek neighborhood since
7 1949, Mrs. Townsell owned and operated a successful business,
8 Townsell's Grocery & Market, in partnership with her beloved
9 husband, Jimmie, for 38 years; she was a woman of great courage who
10 first appeared on the political scene during the tumultuous decade
11 of the 1960s when, at the height of the civil rights era, she
12 accompanied children on school buses and walked the halls of the
13 local high school to help ensure the peaceful desegregation of
14 Irving's educational facilities; and

15 WHEREAS, This commitment would later lead Mrs. Townsell to
16 assume a more prominent role in municipal policymaking, and in 1977
17 she became the first African American ever to win election to the
18 Irving City Council; throughout her extraordinary tenure, which
19 lasted until 1995, she was a respected champion for low-income
20 families and a strong advocate for the expansion of park and library
21 services, the issuance of Community Development Block Grants, and
22 the annexation of the Bear Creek community; and

23 WHEREAS, Mrs. Townsell, who was a devout and active member of
24 the Evergreen Missionary Baptist Church for more than five decades,

1 made innumerable contributions to education, civil rights, and
2 charitable endeavors in the Metroplex community; each Christmas
3 this woman of faith served dinner and provided holiday baskets to
4 her neighbors in need, and she also worked closely with such
5 organizations as West Irving Head Start, the Salvation Army, the
6 Bear Creek Heritage Society, and the Irving Centennial Celebration
7 Committee; she helped to make Irving a more prosperous and
8 affordable city for all its residents, serving as a member of the
9 Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors,
10 the Irving Community Development Corporation, the Community
11 Development Advisory Committee, and the Metropolitan Housing
12 Finance Corporation; and

13 WHEREAS, Those who were privileged to know Mrs. Townsell will
14 not quickly forget the vision, compassion, and determination she
15 brought to every facet of her life; although her presence is gone
16 from us now, her legacy will be long remembered in her hometown of
17 Irving, which has named both an elementary school and the Jackie
18 Townsell Bear Creek Heritage Center in her honor; most importantly,
19 her memory will live on in the hearts of all those whose lives she
20 touched during her years on this earth; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas,
22 1st Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the life of Jackie Mae
23 Howard Townsell of Irving and extend deepest sympathy to the
24 members of her family: to her husband, Jimmie Townsell; to her son,
25 Aaron Townsell; to her sisters, Imogene Rogers and Helen Mosely; to
26 her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and
27 great-great-grandchildren; to her nieces and nephews; and to her

1 many other relatives and friends; and, be it further

2 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
3 prepared for the members of her family and that when the Texas House
4 of Representatives and Senate adjourn this day, they do so in memory
5 of Jackie Mae Howard Townsell.