

By: Dutton

H.R. No. 1069

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Former Houston Astros great James Rodney "J. R."
2 Richard was one of Major League Baseball's brightest stars during
3 the 1970s, and he remains one of the Houston franchise's most
4 enduringly popular players; and

5 WHEREAS, An intimidating presence on the mound, the 6-foot,
6 8-inch Louisiana native was a multisport star at Lincoln High
7 School in Rustin; the first-round pick of the Astros in the 1969
8 summer draft, he attracted attention as a late-season call-up in
9 1971 when he tied a rookie record by striking out 15 batters in his
10 major league debut; after several exceptional stints with the major
11 league club, he earned a full-time spot on the roster in 1975; and

12 WHEREAS, Possessed of an explosive fastball and a wicked,
13 almost unhittable slider, J. R. Richard soon established himself as
14 one of the premier pitchers in the league, steadily collecting wins
15 and fanning batters at a nearly unprecedented rate; during the 1976
16 season, he became just the second Astros pitcher to win 20 games,
17 notching 214 strikeouts and posting an impressive 2.75 ERA in the
18 process; he followed that superlative season with an 18-win
19 campaign, becoming the first Houston player to post back-to-back
20 seasons of at least 18 victories; and

21 WHEREAS, The following season saw the big right-hander take
22 his game to a new level as he again reached the 18-win plateau and,
23 for the first time in his career, topped 300 strikeouts; the 1979
24 season, which proved to be his final campaign, is remembered by fans

1 for Richard's sheer dominance: he posted an 18-13 record and broke
2 his own National League record with 313 strikeouts, placing himself
3 in the rarefied air of pitching legends Sandy Koufax and Nolan Ryan,
4 the only other hurlers to have posted back-to-back 300-K seasons at
5 that time; and

6 WHEREAS, The tremendous success of J. R. Richard has been
7 well documented, as have the trials and tribulations that followed
8 his meteoric rise to baseball stardom; today, the longtime
9 Houstonian gives back to the community as a youth baseball coach,
10 sharing both his baseball experience and his life experience with
11 area youngsters; his life story, which is being made into a movie,
12 *Resurrection: The J. R. Richard Story*, continues to inspire and
13 educate those who know this esteemed gentleman, and it is a pleasure
14 to recognize J. R. Richard at this time; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 79th Texas
16 Legislature hereby honor James Rodney "J. R." Richard for his
17 impressive career in Major League Baseball and for his commitment
18 to helping the young people of Houston, and extend best wishes to
19 him for future happiness and success in all his endeavors; and, be
20 it further

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