

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 659

WHEREAS, John C. Brittain, professor of law and former dean of Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law, is an outstanding Texan who has rendered immeasurable service to the citizens of Texas; and

WHEREAS, In August of 1999, Professor Brittain accepted the position of Dean of Thurgood Marshall School of Law; with that appointment, he immediately recognized the tremendous opportunity to help shape the future of this proud historically black law school; Professor Brittain boldly rose to the challenge, and to date, the bar passage rate has increased and the admission standards have risen as a result of his leadership; and

WHEREAS, During his tenure as dean, Professor Brittain restored stability after the school had been served for four and a half years by interim deans, was instrumental in increasing the admissions profile of entering students, and raised nearly three-quarters of a million dollars for educational programs; and

WHEREAS, John C. Brittain, as counsel in the 1996 landmark civil rights case Sheff v. O'Neil, challenged the racial, economic, and educational segregation between Hartford and the surrounding school districts, stating segregation was a denial of a student's fundamental right to an equal education under the Connecticut Constitution; he was an integral force in gaining equal rights for youths, and he continues his dedication to equal rights in the areas of voting, fair and affordable housing, affirmative action, police misconduct, and the death penalty by using the law and education as a vehicle for change; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, he resigned as dean, but he elected to continue his service to the law school as a tenured professor of law, teaching administrative law, torts, civil procedure, and civil and political rights; as a professor of law for more than 30 years, John Brittain has made a special impact on the lives of countless aspiring law practitioners; and

WHEREAS, Professor Brittain has shared his expertise on housing, education, and civil liberties with a number of state and national organizations, including the National Lawyers Guild, the National Board of the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Leadership Forum, the Teach for America-Houston Advisory Board, and numerous nonprofit boards; and

WHEREAS, Professor Brittain will continue his public service as the chief counsel and deputy director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a 41-year-old civil rights and public interest legal organization; and

WHEREAS, John C. Brittain is described by his students at Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law as a distinguished gentleman of great integrity, intellect, and compassion; Professor Brittain has worked tirelessly during his tenure as dean and professor to bring about social awareness through intellectual stimulation, and he has inspired students to commit to making the world a better place; Professor Brittain has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the lives of all Americans and truly represents the very best in public service; now, therefore, be it

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RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 79th Legislature, hereby recognize Professor John C. Brittain, former dean of Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law, for his innumerable contributions to the people of this state and nation and extend to him sincere best wishes for continued success with his important work; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for Professor Brittain as an expression of high regard from the Texas Senate.

Ellis

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 20, 2005.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate