

By: Coleman

H.C.R. No. 90

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, Richard Allen, a political and civic leader, was  
2 born a slave in Richmond, Virginia, on June 10, 1830 and he was  
3 brought to Texas in 1837 and ultimately settled in Harris County,  
4 where he would serve the people of Harris County for many years; and

5           WHEREAS, While a slave he earned a reputation as a skilled  
6 carpenter and is credited with designing and building the mansion  
7 of Houston mayor Joseph R. Morris; and

8           WHEREAS, After emancipation Allen became a contractor and  
9 bridge builder, and built the first bridge across Buffalo Bayou in  
10 Houston; and

11           WHEREAS, Although he was without a formal education, he  
12 became literate by 1870 and entered politics as a federal voter  
13 registrar in 1867, going on in 1868 to serve as an agent of the  
14 Freedmen's Bureau and as the supervisor of voter registration for  
15 the Fourteenth District of Texas; and

16           WHEREAS, Allen was elected to the Twelfth Legislature in  
17 November 1869 and became one of the first and most active  
18 African-American legislators as a representative of the Fourteenth  
19 District; and

20           WHEREAS, Allen advocated measures for education, law  
21 enforcement, and civil rights and in 1871 the Union League made him  
22 one of its vice presidents; and

23           WHEREAS, He was elected street commissioner in Houston as an  
24 independent candidate in January 1878 and served for one term and

1 later that year was nominated for lieutenant governor, thereby  
2 making him the first African-American to seek statewide office in  
3 Texas; and

4 WHEREAS, Allen served as quartermaster for the  
5 African-American regiment of Texas militia in 1881-1882, and from  
6 1882 to 1885 he acted as storekeeper and then inspector and deputy  
7 collector of United States customs at Houston; and

8 WHEREAS, As customs collector Allen became involved in a  
9 labor dispute at the port of Houston in 1890 when he defied white  
10 labor leaders but urged African-American workers to remain peaceful  
11 during the protests; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1872 and 1879 Allen served as a delegate to the  
13 National Colored Men's Convention and served as a vice president in  
14 1873 and as chairman in 1879 of African-American state conventions  
15 that voiced African Americans' concerns about civil rights,  
16 education, and economic issues; and

17 WHEREAS, When the Prince Hall Masons organized in Texas in  
18 1875, Allen presided over the meeting in Brenham and two years later  
19 became the state's grand master; and

20 WHEREAS, In Houston he led emancipation celebrations,  
21 promoted a park, and served as the superintendent of the Sunday  
22 school at Antioch Baptist Church and sat on the board of directors  
23 of Gregory Institute, Houston's first African-American secondary  
24 school; and

25 WHEREAS, Allen and his wife Nancy had one son and four  
26 daughters and he died on May 16, 1909, in Houston and is buried in  
27 the city cemetery; and

1           WHEREAS, Allen was a freedom fighter who courageously sided  
2 with the abolitionist movement of the North; and

3           WHEREAS, Mr. Allen is best known as a leader, and will forever  
4 be included within an impressive lineage of Texas's civil rights  
5 legends such as the Honorable Barbara Jordan and the Honorable  
6 Mickey Leland; and

7           WHEREAS, Allen has earned the esteem and the right to have the  
8 state office building that houses the Texas Residential  
9 Construction Commission and serves as its state headquarters,  
10 located at 311 East 14th Street, Austin, Texas named in his honor as  
11 a fitting tribute; therefore, be it

12           RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
13 hereby extend its appreciation to Richard Allen for his years of  
14 devotion to public service and direct the Texas Building and  
15 Procurement Commission to name the state office building located at  
16 311 East 14th Street, Austin, Texas the Richard Allen State Office  
17 Building; and, be it further

18           RESOLVED, That the secretary of state forward an official  
19 copy of this resolution to the chair and executive director of the  
20 Texas Building and Procurement Commission.