

By: Noriega

H.C.R. No. 98

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, A pioneering crusader for Hispanic civil rights and  
2 one of the first Mexican Americans appointed to a federal district  
3 court, the Honorable James DeAnda of Houston passed away on  
4 September 7, 2006, after a distinguished legal career that spanned  
5 more than a half-century; and

6           WHEREAS, Born in Houston in 1925, James DeAnda was the son of  
7 immigrants from Mexico who stressed the importance of education; a  
8 1942 graduate of Houston's Jefferson Davis High School, he began  
9 college at Texas A&M University but left school to join the Marines  
10 during World War II, serving in the Pacific theater and in China; he  
11 completed his undergraduate studies after the war, then earned his  
12 law degree from The University of Texas at Austin in 1950, becoming  
13 one of only a few Hispanic attorneys in the state; and

14           WHEREAS, Judge DeAnda returned to Houston to start his  
15 career; he soon became involved in *Hernandez v. Texas*, which proved  
16 to be a landmark legal case with far-reaching implications; the  
17 appeal of the murder conviction of a Hispanic migrant worker in  
18 Jackson County focused on the trial's all-white jury and argued  
19 that Latinos had been systematically excluded from the county's  
20 juries for decades; in 1954, the United States Supreme Court  
21 accepted the argument and overturned the case as a violation of the  
22 constitutional guarantee of equal protection; just four years out  
23 of law school, James DeAnda had helped bring about a decisive civil  
24 rights victory; and

1           WHEREAS, In the years that followed, Judge DeAnda led other  
2 efforts to further Mexican American rights; he successfully argued  
3 cases that resulted in the desegregation of schools in southeastern  
4 Texas, and he joined with others to found the Mexican American Legal  
5 Defense and Educational Fund in 1968 and Texas Rural Legal Aid in  
6 1970; and

7           WHEREAS, In 1979 President Jimmy Carter appointed him as a  
8 federal judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District  
9 of Texas, making him only the second person of Mexican heritage to  
10 sit on the federal bench; Judge DeAnda remained on the court until  
11 1992 and was its chief judge for the last four years of his tenure;  
12 and

13           WHEREAS, Returning to private practice, he joined the law  
14 firm of Solar & Associates in Houston, where he handled civil rights  
15 cases; a revered figure among legal scholars and civil rights  
16 activists, he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award for  
17 Community Service from The University of Texas School of Law Alumni  
18 Association in 2004; and

19           WHEREAS, Chief Judge James DeAnda was a courageous advocate  
20 who stepped forth to herald a new and more equitable era of social  
21 justice in the United States, and he established a monumental  
22 legacy of achievement that furthered the rights of Mexican  
23 Americans; in so doing, he brought about greater equality for all  
24 citizens of the United States; now, therefore, be it

25           RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
26 hereby pay tribute to the life of the Honorable James DeAnda and  
27 extend deepest condolences to the members of his family: to his

1 wife, Joyce DeAnda; to his son, Lou DeAnda; to his sister, Mary  
2 DeAnda; to his brother, Louis DeAnda; to his stepchildren, Kelly  
3 Martin, Patrick Martin, and Nikki Greenfield; and to his other  
4 relatives and many friends and admirers across the state and  
5 nation; and, be it further

6         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
7 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
8 Representatives and Senate adjourn this day, they do so in memory of  
9 Chief Judge James DeAnda.