

By: Smith of Tarrant

H.R. No. 18

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Honorable Tom J. Vandergriff, whose name has  
2 become a byword in North Texas for outstanding public service and  
3 vigorous, visionary leadership, is retiring from the post of  
4 Tarrant County judge in January 2007; and

5           WHEREAS, This distinguished Texan has held elective office  
6 for the better part of six decades; his career in government began  
7 with a highly regarded, 26-year tenure as mayor of Arlington, a  
8 tenure that coincided with one of the most transformative periods  
9 in that city's history; between 1951, when he was first sworn in,  
10 and 1977, when he concluded his final term as mayor, the population  
11 of Arlington soared from fewer than 8,000 inhabitants to  
12 approximately 120,000; and

13           WHEREAS, During those years, Judge Vandergriff helped to  
14 facilitate the construction of the Dallas/Fort Worth International  
15 Airport and the elevation of Arlington State College, now The  
16 University of Texas at Arlington, to senior college status; he also  
17 worked to stimulate the region's tourism industry, notably through  
18 the instrumental role he played in bringing major-league baseball  
19 to North Texas; Judge Vandergriff persuaded the owner of the  
20 Washington Senators to move his club to Arlington, where the team  
21 took the field as the Texas Rangers; for a time after the club  
22 relocated, Judge Vandergriff even served as a broadcaster for the  
23 Rangers' games; and

24           WHEREAS, Six years after retiring as mayor, Judge Vandergriff

1 became the first person to represent the newly created 26th  
2 Congressional District in the United States House of  
3 Representatives, an office he held until 1985; and

4 WHEREAS, Since returning to public service in 1991, Judge  
5 Vandergriff has continued to use his formidable skills and  
6 experience to help address the challenges and opportunities facing  
7 his community; the scope of efforts undertaken by the county  
8 commissioners court under his guidance is reflected in several  
9 recent achievements; in December 2005, Tarrant County implemented  
10 an expanded, online tax-payment system that subsequently won the  
11 county an Excellence Award from the Texas Association of  
12 Governmental Information Technology Managers; the year 2005 also  
13 saw the opening of a \$41 million Family Law Center and the  
14 commencement of work to clear the site for the new Dallas Cowboys  
15 stadium; and

16 WHEREAS, Widely respected both in and out of government  
17 circles, Judge Vandergriff served as founding president of the  
18 North Central Texas Council of Governments, as the first chair of  
19 the Texas Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, and  
20 as a member of a White House Commission on Urban Problems; he has  
21 also been named Citizen of the Year in Arlington, Dallas, and Fort  
22 Worth; and

23 WHEREAS, Born and raised in Carrollton, Tom Vandergriff holds  
24 a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California; in  
25 addition to his achievements as a public servant, he has enjoyed  
26 notable success as a businessman in the private sector, where his  
27 interests have included a car dealership and an insurance agency;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Throughout his long and illustrious career, Tom  
3 Vandergriff has worked tirelessly to advance the common good, and  
4 the tremendous dedication and energy he has brought to his offices  
5 of public trust have justly made him a Tarrant County legend; now,  
6 therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas  
8 Legislature hereby recognize the Honorable Tom J. Vandergriff on  
9 the occasion of his retirement as Tarrant County judge and extend to  
10 him deepest appreciation for the example and legacy of his  
11 outstanding public service; and, be it further

12 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
13 prepared for Judge Vandergriff as an expression of high regard by  
14 the Texas House of Representatives.