

By: Eiland

H.R. No. 1317

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The death of the Reverend James Benjamin Thomas of
2 Galveston on March 16, 2007, at the age of 82, has saddened the many
3 individuals who were privileged to know this remarkable man; and

4 WHEREAS, Fondly known as "the Rev," James Thomas devoted many
5 years of his life to serving his fellow citizens; he distinguished
6 himself on the Galveston City Council for nearly two decades and was
7 a leading advocate for the Galveston Housing Authority and a valued
8 member of numerous civic organizations; and

9 WHEREAS, A former president of the Galveston chapter of the
10 NAACP and a lifelong civil rights activist, Reverend Thomas played
11 a role in establishing Juneteenth as a state holiday; and

12 WHEREAS, He was a longtime proponent of education who helped
13 to integrate local schools, and he worked hard throughout his life
14 to encourage young people to pursue educational opportunities; he
15 also organized the city's midnight basketball league, a program
16 that created a safe and positive environment for kids and helped
17 keep them off the street; in 2004, the City of Galveston and the
18 Parks and Recreation Department named a recreation center at Wright
19 Cuney Park in his honor; and

20 WHEREAS, A World War II veteran, Reverend Thomas worked for
21 the U.S. Post Office for more than 30 years; in 1978, he became the
22 pastor of Market Street Missionary Baptist Church, where he
23 encouraged the congregation as well as youth and low-income
24 families in the community to be "educated, emancipated, and

1 excellent"; he retired from the ministry in 2002; and

2 WHEREAS, Beloved for his many good works, Reverend Thomas
3 lived his life in service to others, endeavoring to make the world
4 around him a better place; although his death has brought great
5 sorrow to the Galveston community, his life was an inspiring
6 example of the good that one person can accomplish; now, therefore,
7 be it

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas
9 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of the Reverend James
10 Benjamin Thomas and extend deepest sympathy to the members of his
11 family; to his wife of 56 years, Ruby Gamble Thomas; to his children
12 and their spouses, James and Anita Thomas, Lawrence and Peggy
13 Thomas, Jocelyn Thomas-Goins and Joe Johnson, Paula Thomas, and
14 Sharon and Randall Parker; to his grandchildren, James, Candace,
15 Justin, Chase, Nikki, Courtney, Iesha, Dana, Joangela, and Randall;
16 to his great-grandchildren, Jasmine, Jacob, Brenna Ann, Marlie,
17 Maci, and Caelan; to his brothers, Lawrence and George Thomas; to
18 his sister, Carrie Bell Clay; to his sisters-in-law, Cleo and Linda
19 Thomas; to Paul Thomas; and to his other relatives and many friends;
20 and, be it further

21 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
22 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
23 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of the
24 Reverend James Benjamin Thomas.