

By: McClendon

H.R. No. 381

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Reverend R. A. Callies, Sr., of San Antonio has  
2 devoted much of his life to paying tribute to distinguished civil  
3 rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

4           WHEREAS, Born in El Campo on September 12, 1929, Reverend  
5 Callies earned a bachelor of arts degree from the University of  
6 Arkansas, served two years in the U.S. Army, and embarked on dual  
7 careers in the ministry and education; the founder and longtime  
8 pastor of First Gethsemane Baptist Church in San Antonio, Reverend  
9 Callies also taught for more than 35 years at a San Antonio school  
10 once known as James W. Riley, Jr., Middle School; he was  
11 instrumental in persuading the San Antonio Independent School  
12 District to rename that campus Martin Luther King, Jr., Middle  
13 School; and

14           WHEREAS, An important catalyst in the local movement to  
15 commemorate Dr. King, Reverend Callies led his family and a few  
16 close friends through the East Side in San Antonio's first MLK March  
17 in 1972; thanks to his perseverance through the early years, this  
18 small function eventually grew to become a city-sponsored event and  
19 the largest such march in the country, with an estimated 100,000  
20 individuals participating; and

21           WHEREAS, Beginning in the 1970s, Reverend Callies led the  
22 drive to erect a statue in Dr. King's honor; assisted by his team of  
23 volunteers, he raised more than \$9,000 over the course of some five  
24 years; in 1982, the statue was dedicated as the Monument of

1 Brotherhood at the intersection of East Houston Street and North  
2 New Braunfels Avenue, a site that has been designated MLK Plaza at  
3 his behest; and

4 WHEREAS, Reverend Callies also championed the development of  
5 Martin Luther King Park on the city's East Side, and he successfully  
6 campaigned to change the name of the street along the south side of  
7 the park to Martin Luther King Drive, to extend MLK Drive to Lord  
8 Road, and to designate the bridge in the 3500 block of MLK Drive as  
9 the MLK Freedom Bridge; and

10 WHEREAS, Joining forces with activists across Texas,  
11 Reverend Callies lobbied to secure the recognition of Martin Luther  
12 King, Jr., Day as a state holiday, a goal that was ultimately  
13 realized in 1992; and

14 WHEREAS, In all his undertakings, Reverend Callies has  
15 rejoiced in the support of his loving wife, Eunice, and their  
16 children, Aaron, Arlington, Doris, Yvette, and Phyllis; and

17 WHEREAS, The recipient of many accolades, Reverend Callies  
18 holds three honorary doctorates; moreover, the San Antonio MLK  
19 Commission presented him with its first annual MLK Distinguished  
20 Achievement Award in 1987; in January 2008, the city further  
21 recognized his contributions with a plaque fittingly placed in MLK  
22 Plaza, near the foot of the King monument; and

23 WHEREAS, R. A. Callies has helped to preserve the legacy of a  
24 great American, providing Texans with lasting reminders of Dr.  
25 King's pursuit of freedom and brotherhood; now, therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas  
27 Legislature hereby honor the Reverend R. A. Callies, Sr., for his

1 civic leadership and extend to him profound appreciation for his  
2 role in perpetuating the ideals of Martin Luther King, Jr.; and, be  
3 it further

4         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
5 prepared for Reverend Callies as an expression of high regard by the  
6 Texas House of Representatives.