

By: Deshotel

H.R. No. 1055

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Renowned American artist Robert Rauschenberg, who  
2 died on May 12, 2008, is being posthumously honored with a 2009  
3 Texas Medal of Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement on April 7, 2009;  
4 and

5 WHEREAS, The Texas Medal of Arts Awards, presented by the  
6 Texas Cultural Trust Council, spotlights and celebrates the  
7 creative excellence, exemplary talents, and outstanding  
8 contributions by Texans in selected categories; and

9 WHEREAS, Born in Port Arthur on October 22, 1925, Robert  
10 Rauschenberg was a pharmacology student at The University of Texas  
11 at Austin before serving as a member of the U.S. Navy during World  
12 War II; after seeing an exhibit of paintings for the first time  
13 while stationed in San Diego, art entered his realm of possibility,  
14 and he went on to attend the Kansas City Art Institute on the G.I.  
15 Bill; he later studied at Academie Julian in Paris, Black Mountain  
16 College in North Carolina, and the Art Students League in New York  
17 City and became friends with such creative forces as musician John  
18 Cage and dancer Merce Cunningham; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Rauschenberg's career took off during the 1950s,  
20 and he soon developed a reputation for experimentation and  
21 mischief; he produced three monochromatic series, *Black Paintings*,  
22 *White Paintings*, and *Red Paintings*, and challenged conceptions of  
23 beauty when he began incorporating found objects into his work;  
24 this idea that junk could be the stuff of art eventually resulted in

1 what he termed "combines," works that combined aspects of painting  
2 and sculpture, the most famous of which was titled *Monogram* and  
3 consisted of a stuffed angora goat, a tire, a police barrier, the  
4 heel of a shoe, a tennis ball, and paint; and

5 WHEREAS, The following decade, Mr. Rauschenberg continued to  
6 obscure the lines between mediums, creating silk-screen prints from  
7 magazine photographs, which he then overlapped with painted  
8 brushstrokes; he also explored choreography, having already  
9 designed sets and costumes for the most innovative dancers of the  
10 day, and in 1964 he toured Europe and Asia with the Merce Cunningham  
11 Dance Company; his status in the art world was sealed that same year  
12 when he became the first American to win the international grand  
13 prize at the Venice Biennale; and

14 WHEREAS, Drawn to collaboration and forever seeking new  
15 combinations of material, Mr. Rauschenberg was involved in an array  
16 of joint projects through the years; he cofounded Experiments in  
17 Art and Technology to encourage cooperation between artists and  
18 engineers, and he enjoyed productive relationships with several  
19 workshops, most notably Universal Limited Art Editions, where he  
20 created his first lithograph; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1984, he established the Rauschenberg Overseas  
22 Culture Interchange, or ROCI, to promote world peace and  
23 understanding, and over an eight-year period, he toured 10  
24 countries, working with local artists and artisans and exhibiting  
25 along the way; that massive undertaking ultimately generated more  
26 than 200 works, most of which were part of an exhibition held at the  
27 National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; and

1           WHEREAS, Mr. Rauschenberg's famous productivity was on  
2 display again in 1997 in a retrospective put on by the Guggenheim  
3 Museum in New York; consisting of some 400 objects, it was the  
4 largest exhibition in the institution's history, yet it did not  
5 capture the full story of his life's work; he remained, for another  
6 decade, as prolific, experimental, and avid an artist as ever, even  
7 after suffering a stroke in 2002 that left him partially paralyzed;  
8 and

9           WHEREAS, Working in what he described as "the gap between art  
10 and life," Robert Rauschenberg profoundly shaped 20th century art  
11 with his eclectic, multifaceted, and freewheeling style that  
12 suggested an artist was not bound to one medium and that everyday  
13 finds could be reconceived to exciting effect; although this icon  
14 of American art is certainly missed, he leaves behind a legacy that  
15 continues to resonate with audiences the world over; now,  
16 therefore, be it

17           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas  
18 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life and work of Robert  
19 Rauschenberg on the occasion of the 2009 Texas Medal of Arts.