

By: Deshotel

H.R. No. 1057

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Family, friends, and fellow residents are mourning
2 the loss of civil rights activist and community leader James A.
3 Roberts of Orange, who died on February 3, 2009, at the age of 65;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, "Zay" Roberts was born in Geneva, Texas, and
6 graduated from Emma H. Wallace High School in Orange in 1962; he
7 went on to attend Lamar University; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts worked for many years at the former
9 Orange Memorial Hospital, and in more recent years, he was a sales
10 representative at a local Ford dealership; and

11 WHEREAS, This esteemed Texan distinguished himself as the
12 first African American to serve as president of the local chapter of
13 the American Heart Association and of the Orange County Council on
14 Alcohol and Drug Abuse; he was also the first African American
15 member of Gideons International in the Golden Triangle area; and

16 WHEREAS, Long active in the struggle for civil rights, Mr.
17 Roberts organized the first annual Martin Luther King Day March in
18 Orange in 1986 and continued to do so every year since; he served as
19 vice president of the Texas NAACP and as president of the Orange
20 chapter; moreover, he was president of the local chapter of the
21 Texas Coalition of Black Democrats and he was a delegate to local,
22 state, and national conventions of the Democratic Party; and

23 WHEREAS, A man of strong religious faith, Mr. Roberts was a
24 longtime member of Salem United Methodist Church, expressing his

1 devotion as a lay leader, Sunday school superintendent, treasurer,
2 and chair of the Board of Missions; a member of United Methodist
3 Men, he was the first African American from his area to serve as a
4 delegate to the church's Jurisdictional and General Conference; and

5 WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts also worked to raise money for the
6 United Negro College Fund, the March of Dimes, and the American
7 Heart Association, coached Little League football, and was active
8 with the Boy Scouts; and

9 WHEREAS, Energetic, generous, and impassioned, James Roberts
10 dedicated his life to the causes in which he believed, and his many
11 contributions will long resonate in the community of Orange and
12 beyond; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
14 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of James A. Roberts and
15 extend sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his
16 brothers, Truman B. Ikner, Billy Roberts, Jerry Roberts, and Johnny
17 Roberts; to his sister, Shirley Hooper; to his stepmother, Doris
18 Swindle; to his aunt, Dainer B. Edwards; to his close friend of 34
19 years, Betty Wade; and to his other relatives and friends; and, be
20 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 James A.
24 Roberts.