

By: Chavez

H.R. No. 1545

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Respected college basketball coach Donald Lee  
2 Haskins passed away on September 7, 2008, at the age of 78,  
3 following a notable career in which he not only attained great  
4 success but also helped topple racial barriers in intercollegiate  
5 athletics; and

6           WHEREAS, The head coach of The University of Texas at El Paso  
7 for 38 seasons, Coach Haskins compiled 719 victories and led his  
8 team to the NCAA championship in 1966; in the dramatic title game of  
9 that season, he became the first coach to start five black players  
10 in a championship contest, and when his Miners defeated the  
11 all-white team from the University of Kentucky, it signaled a  
12 turning point that ultimately led to the desegregation of college  
13 basketball teams in the southern United States; and

14           WHEREAS, Born on March 14, 1930, in Enid, Oklahoma, Don  
15 Haskins played basketball at Oklahoma A&M and for an Amateur  
16 Athletic Union team before beginning his coaching career at  
17 Benjamin High School in Texas in 1955; after two additional high  
18 school jobs in the Lone Star State, he was hired as the head coach at  
19 UTEP in 1961, when it was known as Texas Western College; and

20           WHEREAS, The basketball program he inherited was a humble  
21 one, but Coach Haskins wasted little time in transforming the  
22 Miners into a team of national stature; beginning in 1963, Texas  
23 Western made regular appearances in the major postseason  
24 tournaments, and in 1966, it all came together for Coach Haskins and

1 his players; Texas Western lost just one game all season on its way  
2 to the national championship; the triumph of the team's African  
3 American athletes was a sensation at the time, and it received a  
4 resurgence of interest in 2005, when Haskins chronicled the season  
5 in his best-selling book *Glory Road*, which was subsequently adapted  
6 into a feature film; and

7       WHEREAS, In the decades that followed the national  
8 championship season, this legendary coach continued to enjoy  
9 success with the Miners, capturing numerous Western Athletic  
10 Conference titles and frequently advancing to the NCAA tournament;  
11 at the time of his retirement in 1999, he was tied for fourth in wins  
12 among active college basketball coaches, and he has been inducted  
13 into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, the Texas  
14 Sports Hall of Fame, and the Jim Thorpe Association Oklahoma Sports  
15 Hall of Fame; in 2001, CBS Sportsline.com named him the greatest  
16 Division I men's basketball coach of all time; and

17       WHEREAS, Coach Haskins was known for a gruff demeanor that  
18 earned him his nickname, "the Bear," but he was equally famous for  
19 his sense of humor, his generosity, and his willingness to chat with  
20 everyone he encountered; an influential friend to numerous players  
21 and fellow coaches, he was likewise admired by countless residents  
22 of the city that was his longtime home, and his legacy will continue  
23 to be revered in El Paso and throughout the country for decades to  
24 come; now, therefore, be it

25       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas  
26 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Donald Lee Haskins and  
27 extend deepest condolences to the members of his family: to his

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1 wife, Mary; to his sons, Brent, David, and Steve; to his three  
2 grandsons; and to his other relatives and many friends; and, be it  
3 further

4       RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
5 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
6 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Don  
7 Haskins.