

By: Pena

H.R. No. 2239

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Family, friends, and residents of Edinburg are  
2 mourning the loss of former mayor Alfonso Rene Ramirez, who died on  
3 April 22, 2009, at the age of 86; and

4 WHEREAS, A native of Edinburg, Al Ramirez was the son of  
5 Rafael and Emilia Ramirez; after attending schools in Edinburg, Rio  
6 Grande City, and Hidalgo, he went on to earn a degree at Texas A&M  
7 University; and

8 WHEREAS, Answering his nation's call to duty during World War  
9 II, Mr. Ramirez served in the U.S. Army Air Force as a copilot in a  
10 B-24 bomber, flying dangerous missions over Europe; Mr. Ramirez  
11 received the Purple Heart and the Air Medal for his valiant service,  
12 and he also earned the lasting respect of his crew; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. Ramirez held a master's degree in education from  
14 The University of Texas at Austin; over the course of his career as  
15 an educator, he was a teacher and a principal, and from the late  
16 1960s until his retirement in 1978, he was the director of  
17 instruction and curriculum for the Edinburg Independent School  
18 District; and

19 WHEREAS, While serving as curriculum director of Region One,  
20 he and a team of 10 coworkers developed ROLL (Region One Literacy  
21 Lessons) to help Spanish-speaking students read in their native  
22 language, and he later was instrumental in the development of ROCK  
23 (Region One Curriculum Kit) to help the same students learn to read  
24 in English; and

1           WHEREAS, Also a dedicated civic leader, Mr. Ramirez became  
2 Edinburg's first Mexican American mayor in 1963, winning a  
3 hard-fought election by only 14 votes; in one of his first acts as  
4 mayor, he tried to fulfill a campaign promise by desegregating the  
5 city's swimming pool; the parks board refused to obey his order, so  
6 he arranged to have the African American basketball star Luscious  
7 Jackson, then a player for The University of Texas--Pan American,  
8 escort a group of children to the pool; no one dared turn Mr.  
9 Jackson away, so the pool was effectively desegregated; and

10           WHEREAS, Mr. Ramirez went on to win reelection two years  
11 later by a considerable margin, and he continued as mayor until  
12 1967, when he left office to dedicate himself to education; he also  
13 came to be widely respected as the author and publisher of  
14 historical and genealogical works; and

15           WHEREAS, Known for his integrity, keen intelligence, deep  
16 spirituality, and lifelong commitment to others, Al Ramirez has  
17 left behind a legacy that will continue to resonate in the Edinburg  
18 community for years to come; now, therefore, be it

19           RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas  
20 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Alfonso Rene Ramirez  
21 and extend sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his  
22 wife, Betty R. Ramirez; to his sons, David Ramirez and his wife,  
23 Gracie, Robert Ramirez and his wife, Elvia, Steven Ramirez and his  
24 wife, Valerie, and Dan Ramirez and his wife, Maria; to his sisters,  
25 Edna Ramon and Delia Gleber; to his 11 grandchildren and 5  
26 great-grandchildren; and to his other relatives and friends; and,  
27 be it further

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1           RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
2 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
3 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Al Ramirez.