

By: Branch

H.C.R. No. 2

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Lone Star State lost a distinguished and pivotal  
2 figure in Texas politics on May 29, 2011, with the death of former  
3 governor William P. Clements, Jr.; and

4 WHEREAS, The state's second-longest-serving governor and  
5 first Republican governor since Reconstruction, Bill Clements was  
6 initially elected in 1978, having never before run for public  
7 office; he served until 1983 and then made a stunning comeback four  
8 years later to serve another term; and

9 WHEREAS, During his combined eight-year tenure, he  
10 established a reputation as an efficient, business-like chief  
11 executive, and his gubernatorial appointments generally reflected  
12 a results-oriented approach; he also named the first two women to  
13 the Texas Supreme Court and the first African American to the Texas  
14 Court of Criminal Appeals; moreover, he took a leading role in the  
15 war on drugs and advocated powerfully for anticrime bills passed by  
16 the legislature, and he initiated an extensive renovation of the  
17 State Capitol; and

18 WHEREAS, Born in Dallas on April 13, 1917, Bill Clements was  
19 an all-state guard on the Highland Park High School football team;  
20 he was offered athletic scholarships but turned them down in order  
21 to help his family during the Great Depression; after working in  
22 South Texas as a roughneck and driller, he attended The University  
23 of Texas at Austin and graduated from Southern Methodist University  
24 in 1939; he returned to the oil fields, and in 1947 he and two

1 partners borrowed the money to buy two oil rigs and start a company,  
2 SEDCO, which grew to become the world's largest oil drilling  
3 contracting firm; and

4 WHEREAS, This self-made multimillionaire initially rejected  
5 attempts by Texas Republicans to recruit him for public office  
6 though he worked actively in the party; in 1972, he served as Texas  
7 co-chair of President Richard Nixon's reelection campaign, and he  
8 was appointed deputy secretary of defense the following year and  
9 remained at the Pentagon during the Ford administration; he decided  
10 to run for governor in 1978 and surprised many when he defeated a  
11 better-known opponent; and

12 WHEREAS, Over the years, Governor Clements was a generous  
13 benefactor of institutions of higher education; he and his wife,  
14 Rita, contributed well over \$20 million for facilities, programs,  
15 and professorships at SMU, and he served several terms as a member  
16 and officer of the board of trustees; through his support, the  
17 university's William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies  
18 developed into an internationally known catalyst for research,  
19 publishing, and public programming in a variety of disciplines  
20 related to the American Southwest and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands;  
21 named trustee emeritus in 1991, he was also recognized with the  
22 Mustang Award, an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree, and the  
23 SMU Distinguished Alumni Award; in 2009, Governor Clements  
24 continued his philanthropy and gave a remarkable \$100 million to UT  
25 Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, the largest single gift in  
26 the history of the institution; and

27 WHEREAS, Plain-spoken, pragmatic, and dedicated to the

1 prosperity of the Lone Star State, Bill Clements brought a business  
2 perspective to government, and his achievements will continue to  
3 resonate in the lives of his fellow Texans for years to come; now,  
4 therefore, be it

5         RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas  
6 hereby pay tribute to the memory of the Honorable William P.  
7 Clements, Jr., and extend sincere condolences to the members of his  
8 family: to his wife, Rita Crocker Clements; to his daughter, Nancy  
9 Clements Seay; and to all those who mourn the passing of this  
10 esteemed Texan; and, be it further

11         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
12 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
13 Representatives and Senate adjourn this day, they do so in memory of  
14 former governor Bill Clements.