

By: Patrick

H.R. No. 240

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The city of Arlington lost one of its most
2 influential leaders with the passing of former mayor Tom J.
3 Vandergriff on December 30, 2010, at the age of 84; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Carrollton on January 29, 1926, Tom
5 Vandergriff moved to Arlington when he was 11; after earning a
6 degree from the University of Southern California in 1947, he
7 returned home and went to work at the family car dealership; he also
8 joined the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and assumed the presidency
9 of that organization at the age of 23; and

10 WHEREAS, Two years later, in 1951, Mr. Vandergriff ran for
11 mayor and won; he went on to be reelected 12 times, spending a total
12 of 26 years in office and leading the city through more than a
13 quarter-century of dramatic progress and great change; he is
14 credited with bringing numerous businesses to Arlington, including
15 a General Motors plant and Six Flags Over Texas; in addition, he
16 presided over the creation of Lake Arlington and worked to have
17 Arlington State College made a part of The University of Texas
18 System; and

19 WHEREAS, Mayor Vandergriff was perhaps proudest of his
20 efforts to attract a major league baseball team to Arlington, which
21 came to a successful conclusion when he threw out the first pitch at
22 the Texas Rangers' opening game on April 21, 1972; his interest in
23 the ball club was such that he served as one of its broadcasters for
24 a time, and he was inducted into the Texas Rangers Baseball Hall of

1 Fame in 2004; and

2 WHEREAS, During his tenure as mayor, this dedicated elected
3 official saw Arlington grow from 8,000 to more than 120,000
4 residents; despite his many responsibilities, he still made time to
5 answer his own phone and mail, return all calls, and perform
6 marriage ceremonies; and

7 WHEREAS, Mr. Vandergriff stepped down as mayor in 1977 but
8 returned to public service after being elected to the U.S. House of
9 Representatives in 1982 by the voters of the state's 26th
10 Congressional District; he later distinguished himself as Tarrant
11 County judge from 1991 to 2007, continuing to put his expertise to
12 work in behalf of his fellow citizens; and

13 WHEREAS, Widely respected for his tireless perseverance and
14 ability to rise above partisan politics, "Mr. Arlington," as he was
15 known, served as the chair of numerous civic organizations, on the
16 boards of many community and governmental entities, and as a member
17 of President Johnson's White House Commission on Urban Problems in
18 the late 1960s; and

19 WHEREAS, In all of his endeavors, he enjoyed the love and
20 support of his wife, Anna Waynette Vandergriff, whom he originally
21 met in high school and married in 1949; they shared 60 rewarding
22 years together before she passed away in 2009 and were the parents
23 of five children; and

24 WHEREAS, The city of Arlington, now one of the 50 largest in
25 the United States, greatly benefited from the vision, initiative,
26 and outstanding contributions of Tom Vandergriff, and his
27 achievements will continue to influence the lives of North Texas

1 residents for years to come; now, therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
3 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of the Honorable
4 Tom J. Vandergriff and extend sincere condolences to the members of
5 his family: to his children, Vanessa Watters and her husband, Mark,
6 Victor Vandergriff and his wife, Kristin, Valerie Kelton and her
7 husband, Paul, and Viveca Vandergriff; to his grandchildren,
8 Kendell Kelton, Rachel Kelton, Katharine Vandergriff, Parker
9 Vandergriff, and Caroline Vandergriff; to his sister, Virginia
10 Deering; and to his other relatives and friends; 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 adjourns this day, it do so in memory of the
14 Honorable Tom J. Vandergriff.