

By: Eiland

H.R. No. 518

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, James Polk Simpson, a renowned Galveston attorney
2 who dramatically altered the ambiance of that city in the 1950s,
3 passed away in Austin on November 27, 2010, at the age of 87; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Corpus Christi on September 27, 1923, Jim
5 Simpson served in World War II as a navigator and bombardier with
6 the 451st Bombardment Squadron, 322nd Bombardment Group, 9th Air
7 Force, and flew 59 missions over France, Germany, and Belgium; and

8 WHEREAS, After leaving the service, he earned a law degree
9 from The University of Texas in 1950 and then joined the FBI; his
10 assignments with the bureau took him to Chicago and to Minneapolis,
11 where he met his future wife, Constance Ann Griffith, who was then
12 working as an FBI stenographer; the couple married in 1952 and moved
13 to Galveston, where Mr. Simpson began to practice law; and

14 WHEREAS, At the time, Galveston and the surrounding county
15 were home to a number of illegal establishments that operated with
16 no fear of interference from local officials; in 1954, Mr. Simpson
17 ran for the office of county district attorney, vowing to rid the
18 city of these types of businesses; he lost by a mere eight votes in
19 the primary runoff, but three years later he got another
20 opportunity when he was named special assistant attorney general;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Using the authority of his new office, Mr. Simpson
23 hired two refinery workers as undercover agents and set about
24 filing civil injunctions; because those being targeted had

1 connections in the county courthouse, Mrs. Simpson prepared the
2 search warrants and other legal paperwork in secret at the couple's
3 home; ultimately, nearly 200 injunctions were served against both
4 individuals and properties; and

5 WHEREAS, In his work as an attorney, Mr. Simpson demonstrated
6 an enduring empathy for the underdog, a sympathy born of his
7 experience growing up poor during the Depression; among the clients
8 he represented in his legal practice were many individuals who had
9 suffered work-related injuries in Texas refineries and chemical
10 plants; and

11 WHEREAS, Deeply engaged in civic affairs, Jim Simpson served
12 as a trustee of the College of the Mainland for 23 years and
13 presided for two terms as president of the board; he was also a key
14 figure in local Democratic Party politics; this esteemed Texan
15 recounted his colorful career in a 2007 memoir titled *Flak Bait:
16 Eight Decades Dodging Flak as a Bombardier, FBI Agent, Trial
17 Lawyer, and Texas Maverick*; and

18 WHEREAS, In the *Galveston Daily News* article that marked his
19 passing, Mr. Simpson was remembered "for his courtly manner,
20 passion for justice, gift for language and public speaking, and
21 gregarious nature"; he was a Texas original, and he will be missed;
22 now, therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
24 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of James Polk Simpson and
25 extend sincere sympathy to the members of his family: to his wife,
26 Connie Simpson; to his daughter and her husband, Simone and Geoff
27 Leavenworth; to his sons, Scott, James, and Gregory Simpson; to his

1 grandchildren, Robert and Jennifer Simpson and Mark and James
2 Leavenworth; to his great-grandchildren, Leslie and Eva Simpson; to
3 his sister, Pat Simpson Hollenbeck; and to his many other relatives
4 and friends; and, be it further

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