

By: Gallego

H.R. No. 1010

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, In the 1950s, the golf team of San Felipe High School
2 in Del Rio battled adversity and defied expectations to become the
3 best in Texas, and Lupe Felan was an important member of that
4 storied squad; and

5 WHEREAS, The team got its start after J. B. Pena became the
6 superintendent of the San Felipe Independent School District in the
7 mid-1950s, and he and a friend introduced golf as a school sport at
8 San Felipe High; they were surprised and pleased to discover that
9 there were some very talented golfers among the students in the
10 then-segregated school, including Mr. Felan and the other players
11 that joined the Mustangs golf team; and

12 WHEREAS, These students had learned much about the game while
13 working as caddies at the exclusive San Felipe Country Club, a
14 course that they were initially prohibited from playing; determined
15 to take part in the sport, several of these aspiring athletes
16 decided in 1954 to build their own course, which they dubbed the El
17 Llanito Country Club; it was, by necessity, a rather crude design:
18 one hole surrounded by multiple tees with a "green" that was
19 actually made of caliche instead of grass; nonetheless, the boys
20 used the hardscrabble course to hone their skills through long
21 hours of practice, often playing until after dark; and

22 WHEREAS, After the harsh conditions of El Llanito, the team
23 members found that competing on regulation courses as part of
24 school matches was relatively easy, and they quickly established

1 themselves as winners, even as they had to ignore verbal abuse and
2 other forms of discrimination; the San Felipe Mustangs were
3 regional champs in 1956 and finished second to Ranger High in the
4 state championships; in 1957, the team qualified once more for the
5 finals and traveled to the Austin Country Club to battle for the
6 title, where they were the only minority players in the tournament;
7 there, the team turned in an outstanding performance, shooting a
8 combined 643; this bested runner-up Shamrock High by 35 strokes and
9 earned San Felipe the state title; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Felan's background was quite different from that
11 experienced by most state champion golfers of his era; the oldest of
12 eight children, he was called on to help out the family financially,
13 so he began caddying at the San Felipe Country Club during his early
14 teens; he played in the 1956 state tournament, when the team
15 finished second, and was an alternate on the 1957 championship
16 squad; after graduating from San Felipe High, he enlisted in the
17 United States Marine Corps and served his country for more than 30
18 years before retiring in 1990; during his years as a marine, he
19 often participated in military golf competitions; he is now retired
20 from the California Department of Motor Vehicles, where he
21 established a second career, and he continues to play golf as an
22 active member of the Southern California Golf Association, the
23 Southern California Mexican American Golf Association, and the
24 Marine Combat Center Golf Association, maintaining a single-digit
25 handicap; he lives in Yucca Valley, California; and

26 WHEREAS, Through talent, determination, and ingenuity, Lupe
27 Felan and the other members of the Mustangs golf team overcame

1 difficult circumstances to become state champions, and their
2 achievement is a continuing source of pride for the residents of Del
3 Rio and an inspiration for all who have heard their story; now,
4 therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
6 Legislature hereby honor Lupe Felan for his contributions to the
7 San Felipe High School golf teams of 1956 and 1957 and extend to him
8 sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

9 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
10 prepared for Mr. Felan as an expression of high regard by the Texas
11 House of Representatives.