

By: Geren

H.R. No. 1022

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The State of Texas has lost an admired lawmaker,
2 conservationist, and education advocate with the passing of former
3 state senator Don Kennard on March 17, 2011, at the age of 81; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Houston on May 6, 1929, Donley C. Kennard was
5 the son of Don and Clayton "Honey" Kennard; his prowess on the
6 Arlington Heights High School football team won him an athletic
7 scholarship to North Texas State College, and he also attended
8 Texas Christian University before completing his bachelor's degree
9 in business administration at The University of Texas at Austin;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, He began a successful campaign for a Fort Worth seat
12 in the Texas House of Representatives during his senior year of
13 college, declaring his intention "to represent all the people, not
14 just the select few"; having served his constituents with great
15 dedication from 1953 to 1963, he ran for the state senate and
16 represented District 10 for another decade; Senator Kennard was
17 senate president pro tempore during the 60th and 61st Texas
18 Legislatures, and he gave generously of his time over the years as a
19 mentor to his colleagues; and

20 WHEREAS, A fierce champion of public education, he served on
21 the education committees in both chambers and helped secure initial
22 funding for what would become Tarrant County College; he worked
23 diligently to raise the profile of Arlington State College, which
24 had sought to become a senior college for more than a decade, and

1 his efforts culminated in a filibuster that lasted 29 hours and 22
2 minutes; he got the votes to make the school a four-year
3 institution, and in 1996, the school, which had become The
4 University of Texas at Arlington, named Senator Kennard to its new
5 Walk of Fame; and

6 WHEREAS, This dynamic legislator demonstrated his commitment
7 to working Texans in another filibuster designed to kill a proposal
8 to extend the sales tax to food; strolling into the senate with a
9 sack of groceries, he illustrated how much more fruits and
10 vegetables would cost under the bill; Senator Kennard was a strong,
11 progressive voice for civil rights, historic preservation, and
12 environmental issues, and he brought his passion for those causes
13 to the numerous committees on which he served; in addition, he
14 chaired the Federal Relations, Public Health, and Parks and
15 Recreation Committees, and he was vice chair of the Conservation
16 and Reclamation and Parks and Wildlife Committees; and

17 WHEREAS, Also during his tenure, Senator Kennard
18 filibustered to secure a one-cent portion of the per-pack cigarette
19 tax to create a reliable revenue stream for the Parks and Wildlife
20 Department; he borrowed a falcon from the Fort Worth Zoo to draw
21 attention to this need, and his victory directed tens of millions of
22 dollars to our state parks in the ensuing decades; and

23 WHEREAS, Senator Kennard worked between Texas legislative
24 sessions in Washington, D.C., running the office of U.S.
25 Congressman Jim Wright; on his return to private life, Senator
26 Kennard established the Natural Areas Surveys with the LBJ School
27 of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin and served as

1 its director; the research produced was instrumental in the
2 preservation of Enchanted Rock, among other natural treasures;
3 returning to Washington, he became a consultant for a public
4 relations firm, and he was appointed to the New Jersey Pinelands
5 Commission; and

6 WHEREAS, Married during his college years to his childhood
7 sweetheart, the former Jackie Porterfield, Don Kennard became the
8 proud father of a daughter, Karen; after the untimely passing of his
9 first wife, he was fortunate enough to find love a second time with
10 the former Mary Jo Williams, and he welcomed into his family her
11 children, Eric and Paige; he eventually knew the joy of becoming
12 "Grandpa Donnie" to six cherished grandchildren; and

13 WHEREAS, Long a student of history, Senator Kennard moved to
14 Charles Town, West Virginia, with his wife and restored the former
15 home of a nephew of George Washington; moreover, the couple became
16 co-owners of Indian Hot Springs, a historic site on the Rio Grande
17 in Trans-Pecos, where Senator Kennard periodically hosted
18 conservation and preservation forums for fellow legislators and
19 clients; Senator and Mrs. Kennard moved to the Austin area in 2003
20 to be closer to their children and grandchildren; and

21 WHEREAS, Through his determination to improve higher
22 education and to preserve the natural beauty of the Lone Star State,
23 Senator Kennard left an enduring legacy, and those who were
24 privileged to share in the richness of his life will forever
25 remember him as a man of vision, compassion, and conviction; now,
26 therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas

1 Legislature hereby pay special tribute to the memory of the
2 Honorable Donley C. Kennard and extend sincere condolences to the
3 members of his family: to his wife, Mary Jo Kennard; to his
4 children, Karen Gordon and her husband, Dr. Leo Gordon, Eric Austin
5 Williams and his wife, Melanie Castro Williams, and Paige Williams
6 Smith and her husband, Keith Smith; to his grandchildren, Daniel
7 Gordon, Aimee, Jack, and Ethan Williams, and Vivian and Oliver
8 Smith; and to his other relatives and many friends; and, be it
9 further

10 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
11 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
12 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Senator Don
13 Kennard.