

By: Martinez

H.R. No. 1515

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Rio Grande Valley lost a visionary civic leader
2 with the death of William Summers of Weslaco on November 30, 2009,
3 at the age of 71; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Wharton, Bill Summers graduated from Donna
5 High School and attended Pan American University on a track
6 scholarship; he served his country in the United States Army and
7 then enlisted in the National Guard, rising to the rank of staff
8 sergeant; in 1958, he married his high school sweetheart, the
9 former Jo Jeanette Gray, and they went on to become the proud
10 parents of two sons, Randall and Michael; eventually, Mr. and Mrs.
11 Summers shared in the joy of welcoming four grandchildren into
12 their family; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. Summers distinguished himself during a career in
14 public relations and banking; in 1987, he became president and
15 chief executive officer of the Rio Grande Valley Partnership, a
16 regional chamber of commerce promoting opportunities for area
17 citizens and enterprises; he encouraged local governments,
18 economic development organizations, and chambers to collaborate
19 for the promotion of the region as a whole; and

20 WHEREAS, Under his skillful guidance, the Rio Grande Valley
21 Partnership became the first Texas chamber of commerce to establish
22 an office in Tamaulipas, Mexico, and Mr. Summers fostered
23 communication among business leaders and officials on both sides of
24 the border; he coordinated the Rio Grande Valley Mobility Task

1 Force, which has brought more than \$500 million in transportation
2 funding to the area; in addition, he facilitated one of three Rural
3 Empowerment Zones, resulting in a \$40 million award from the U.S.
4 Department of Agriculture; and

5 WHEREAS, This dynamic Texan also became a pioneer in the tort
6 reform movement; he founded and administered Citizens Against
7 Lawsuit Abuse, which grew to become a nationwide organization; and

8 WHEREAS, Giving generously of his time and talents, Mr.
9 Summers served as president of the Weslaco school board, the
10 Weslaco Lions Club, and the Weslaco Chamber of Commerce; the city
11 named him Man of the Year in 1974 and Outstanding Citizen in 1980,
12 and in 2009, a section of Texas Farm-to-Market Road 1015 in Weslaco
13 was named the Bill Summers International Boulevard in recognition
14 of his myriad contributions; among other accolades that Mr. Summers
15 received were the Civil Justice Appreciation Award from the Texas
16 Civil Justice League, the Russell H. Perry Award from the Texas
17 Department of Transportation, and the Legal Watchdog Award from the
18 American Tort Reform Association; and

19 WHEREAS, Through his knowledge, skill, and tireless
20 dedication, Bill Summers made a tremendous impact on the growth and
21 economic development of the Rio Grande Valley, and his devotion to
22 his community and his family remains a lasting inspiration to those
23 who were privileged to share in his love and friendship; now,
24 therefore, be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
26 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of William "Bill"
27 Summers and extend sincere condolences to the members of his

1 family: to his wife, Jo Summers; to his sons, Mike Summers and Randy
2 Summers and his wife, Alma; to his grandsons, Scott, Kevin, Jacob,
3 and William Summers; and to his other relatives and friends; and, be
4 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 Bill
8 Summers.