

By: Dutton

H.R. No. 113

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The city of Houston lost an admired attorney,  
2 educator, and civil rights activist with the death of Otis Harold  
3 King on November 21, 2012, at the age of 77; and

4           WHEREAS, Born in Texarkana on February 3, 1935, Mr. King was  
5 the son of Griffin and Eula King; he grew up in the historic Fifth  
6 Ward and graduated as salutatorian of Phillis Wheatley High School;  
7 as a student at Texas Southern University, he became a star debater,  
8 and he and his partner, future congresswoman Barbara Jordan,  
9 defeated the Harvard University team in 1956; Mr. King received his  
10 bachelor's degree in biology magna cum laude and then served his  
11 country in the United States Army for two years; and

12           WHEREAS, After completing his military service, Mr. King  
13 earned a law degree at TSU and became involved in the civil rights  
14 movement; he participated in numerous protests, including an event  
15 now recognized as Houston's first sit-in, and helped organize the  
16 Progressive Youth Association and coordinate demonstrations;  
17 during the 1960s, he also began teaching in the law school at TSU,  
18 and in 1970 he earned a master of laws degree from Harvard  
19 University, where he was a Ford Foundation Fellow in Clinical Legal  
20 Education; and

21           WHEREAS, Mr. King was a professor at the Thurgood Marshall  
22 School of Law at TSU for nearly four decades; in the 1970s, he  
23 interrupted his distinguished academic career to accept his  
24 appointment by Mayor Fred Hofheinz as Houston's first African

1 American city attorney; he was asked to continue in that role in the  
2 next administration, but he felt a profound allegiance to the law  
3 school and returned to TSU; during his 10 years as dean, he expanded  
4 the school's enrollment more than threefold and was a powerful  
5 advocate for its advancement; he led a student protest that spurred  
6 the university to construct a building for the school, and he  
7 traveled frequently to Austin to meet with elected officials  
8 regarding the funding needed to hire more faculty and enhance the  
9 quality of the institution; and

10 WHEREAS, This talented educator resumed teaching in 1980; two  
11 decades later, he retired, but he continued to teach on a part-time  
12 basis for a number of years; he maintained many professional  
13 affiliations, among them the State Bar of Texas, the American Bar  
14 Association, and the National Bar Association; moreover, he was a  
15 member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and the NAACP; and

16 WHEREAS, Devoted to his family, Mr. King was the father of  
17 Byron and Corey King, and he helped raise his stepson, Joncy  
18 Rickett; he took great pride in his grandchildren, Jeremy, Cameron,  
19 Alan, and Lauren King; a man of many interests, he enjoyed sailing,  
20 fishing, writing poetry, and sculpting, and he was a talented  
21 painter whose works adorn many homes; and

22 WHEREAS, Otis King made profound contributions to his fellow  
23 Texans through his dedication to social progress and to legal  
24 education, and although he will be deeply missed, those who were  
25 privileged to know him will long remember him for his keen intellect  
26 and his unyielding commitment to excellence; now, therefore, be it

27 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas

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1 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Otis Harold King and  
2 extend sincere condolences to his many relatives and friends; and,  
3 be it further

4       RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
5 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
6 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Otis King.