

By: Hunter

H.R. No. 785

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Residents of the Coastal Bend area lost an admired
2 civic leader with the death of Mary Frances Diedrick Haas of Corpus
3 Christi on February 1, 2013, at the age of 98; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in New Jersey on July 22, 1914, the former Mary
5 Frances Diedrick was the daughter of Philip and Josephine Diedrick;
6 she left home at the age of 14 to attend Trenton State Teachers'
7 College, where she earned her bachelor's degree in English and
8 history and her teaching certification; she taught special
9 education classes for a time, and she also sold encyclopedias
10 door-to-door and worked at Macy's book department; and

11 WHEREAS, She met Paul Haas at a church social, and they were
12 married in 1936; the following year, the couple moved to Houston,
13 and in 1941, when Mr. Haas was hired by an oil and gas company, they
14 relocated to Corpus Christi, where Mrs. Haas became deeply engaged
15 in community life; she helped to create what is now Texas A&M
16 University--Corpus Christi, serving on the original board that
17 worked to establish an institution of higher education in the city
18 and later as the president of the board of directors for the
19 school's foundation for development and expansion; she was
20 appointed by Governors Bill Clements and Mark White to the
21 University System of South Texas Board of Trustees, becoming the
22 first female member of that body and later its president, and she
23 played an instrumental role in the negotiations that resulted in
24 the three state universities in Corpus Christi, Kingsville, and

1 Laredo joining the Texas A&M system; she also served on the
2 TAMU--Corpus Christi president's council and assisted in the
3 creation of the school's Early Childhood Education Center; she
4 received an honorary doctorate from the school in 1995; and

5 WHEREAS, She and her husband established the Paul and Mary
6 Haas Foundation in 1954, and Mrs. Haas guided the foundation in its
7 mission of philanthropy for half a century; the organization
8 awarded more than \$3 million in scholarships to over 1,000
9 deserving students and donated some \$15 million to worthy
10 organizations in the area; in addition, the Haas Foundation
11 established endowed chairs in English and history at TAMU--Corpus
12 Christi and a chair in genetics and an endowment for urologic cancer
13 research at the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center; a lifelong supporter
14 of education, Mrs. Haas annually selected a book to be presented to
15 each member of the graduating class at the Paul R. Haas Middle
16 School; and

17 WHEREAS, For three decades, Mrs. Haas served as a "Pink Lady"
18 at Spohn Hospital, and she was recognized for her efforts at the
19 hospital with an award for volunteerism; she also chaired the
20 citizens' board of directors of Martineau Juvenile Hall and was a
21 member and officer of the Coastal Bend Youth City School; a lover of
22 music and theater, she served on the board of directors of the local
23 symphony and a municipal arts commission, and she served as
24 secretary of the Patrons of De Pineda and as president of the La
25 Retama study club; in addition, she was a member of the local
26 library and YWCA boards as well as a founding member and trustee of
27 the Parkway Presbyterian Church; and

1 WHEREAS, In her leisure, Mrs. Haas enjoyed knitting and doing
2 needlepoint, and she sewed blankets for premature babies born at
3 Driscoll Children's Hospital; she also liked to golf and to go
4 dancing with her husband, with whom she shared 72 years, before his
5 passing in 2008; moreover, Mrs. Haas was a devoted mother, and she
6 took great pride in her children and their spouses, Rheta and Robert
7 Page, Raymond and Amanda Haas, and Rene Haas and David Perry, as
8 well as in her 10 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren; and

9 WHEREAS, Although this remarkable and accomplished woman
10 will be deeply missed, she leaves behind an extraordinary legacy
11 that will continue to resonate in South Texas and beyond for years
12 to come; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
14 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Mary Frances
15 Diedrick Haas and extend sincere sympathy to her friends and loved
16 ones; and, be it further

17 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
18 prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of
19 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Mary
20 Frances Diedrick Haas.