

By: Giddings

H.R. No. 1336

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The proud heritage of a Dallas institution is being
2 honored on April 12, 2013, with the dedication of the Moorland YMCA
3 Building on Flora Street as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark; and

4 WHEREAS, In the late 1920s, the Young Men's Christian
5 Association of Dallas began an effort to create a YMCA in the
6 African American neighborhood of North Dallas; despite the economic
7 hardship of the Great Depression, local residents raised \$75,000,
8 and another \$25,000 was contributed by the Rosenwald Fund, which
9 helped build YMCAs for African American communities across the
10 American South; and

11 WHEREAS, Named for Dr. Reverend Jesse Edward Moorland, a
12 national official of the YMCA, the new facility was designed in the
13 Italian Renaissance Revival style and opened in 1930; it offered
14 programs in education and recreation for local youth and made its
15 gymnasium available for use by nearby schools; a number of
16 prominent athletes received their earliest training there, among
17 them welterweight boxing champion Curtis Cokes, professional
18 football player Jimmy "Iron Claw" Hill, and Chicago Cubs shortstop
19 Ernie Banks; and

20 WHEREAS, This handsome, redbrick building became a hub for
21 the social, cultural, and political life of the African American
22 community in Dallas as one of the few places where African Americans
23 could congregate outside of church; it served as an important
24 meeting venue for civil rights activists and members of the NAACP,

1 and it provided hospitality for African American visitors who had
2 difficulty finding a hotel room in the segregated city; famous
3 overnight guests included boxer Muhammad Ali and Supreme Court
4 Justice Thurgood Marshall; and

5 WHEREAS, Eventually the needs of area YMCA members outgrew
6 the building, and the facility on Flora Street was closed in 1970
7 and replaced with a location in Oak Cliff; the Moorland YMCA
8 Building continues to serve the community today as the home of the
9 Dallas Black Dance Theatre, which purchased the property in 1999;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, For more than 80 years, the Moorland YMCA Building
12 on Flora Street has played a meaningful role in the lives of African
13 Americans in Dallas, and the preservation of this notable structure
14 for future generations is truly deserving of recognition; now,
15 therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
17 Legislature hereby commemorate the dedication of the Moorland YMCA
18 Building as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and commend all
19 those responsible for this noteworthy occasion.