

By: Wu

H.C.R. No. 116

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Fifty years ago this session, Thomas J. Lee of San
2 Antonio became the first Asian American to serve in the Texas
3 Legislature; and

4 WHEREAS, A native of Canton, China, Tom Lee moved to the
5 United States with his family at the age of eight; he grew up on San
6 Antonio's West Side, where he learned to speak English and Spanish
7 as well as Cantonese; during World War II, he was the first officer
8 of Chinese descent to serve in the U.S. Navy, and after the war he
9 remained active in the navy reserve at the rank of lieutenant
10 commander; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Lee studied at The University of Texas at
12 Austin, the University of Notre Dame, and St. Mary's University,
13 where he earned a bachelor's degree in accounting in 1956 and a law
14 degree in 1960; he went on to become a successful attorney and
15 businessman in the Chinese community of San Antonio; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1964, Mr. Lee was elected to the Texas House of
17 Representatives, representing Bexar County in the 59th
18 Legislature; a Democrat, he served from 1965 until 1967, and he was
19 a member of the Insurance, Penitentiaries, and Revenue and Taxation
20 Committees, among others; he died in San Antonio on November 7,
21 1996, at the age of 73; and

22 WHEREAS, Through his service to the people of San Antonio and
23 the State of Texas, Tom Lee was a pioneer who helped open the door to
24 a more diverse and inclusive state legislature, and his legacy

1 continues to resonate to this day; now, therefore, be it

2 RESOLVED, That the 84th Legislature of the State of Texas
3 hereby pay tribute to the memory of the Honorable Thomas J. Lee, the
4 first Asian American to serve in the Texas Legislature.