

By: Phelan

H.R. No. 485

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, A rich and joyful life drew to a close with the
2 passing of Joseph Vincent Tortorice Sr. of Beaumont on December 20,
3 2014, at the age of 90; and

4 WHEREAS, Joe Tortorice was born in Plaquemine, Louisiana, on
5 September 12, 1924, to Salvatore and Rosa Tortorice, and he was
6 raised in Beaumont; the fifth of seven children, he grew up in a
7 large and loving family, and he learned his strong work ethic at an
8 early age by watching his father, a Sicilian immigrant, rise early
9 and return late each day from the small café that he owned; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Tortorice proved himself a talented athlete in
11 high school, earning selection to the All City teams in football,
12 baseball, and basketball; during his junior year, he left school to
13 enlist in the armed forces, and he served in Europe with the 17th
14 Signal Corps of the 1st Army; he was 19 when he went ashore in
15 Normandy three days after D-Day, and over the ensuing months, he
16 advanced with his unit through France, Holland, Belgium, and into
17 Germany; he was at the Battle of the Bulge, and he helped liberate
18 the concentration camp at Buchenwald; and

19 WHEREAS, Once home again, Mr. Tortorice returned to high
20 school as a senior to complete his education, and there he met his
21 future wife, Margaret Rose Montalbano; they were married for 67
22 years, until his death, and they raised four children, Joe, Judy,
23 Pinky, and Suzanne; later in life, he was blessed with 15
24 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Tortorice began his career as a salesman for a
2 wholesale grocery company; he subsequently struck out on his own,
3 buying a grocery store and building on that business until he owned
4 four groceries, two laundromats, two dry cleaners, and a small
5 sandwich shop, J's BBQ and Washateria; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1976, Mr. Tortorice's son, Joe, built upon that
7 small sandwich shop and opened the first Jason's Deli in a shopping
8 center in Beaumont; from the company's earliest days, Joe Tortorice
9 Sr. provided guidance and financial support, and as the company
10 grew to include 253 locations in 29 states, he remained an
11 inspirational and beloved figure to the company's employees; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Tortorice retired in 1990, and in his newfound
13 leisure he delighted in traveling with his wife, fishing at their
14 beach house, playing golf, and spending many happy hours with his
15 grandchildren and great-grandchildren; a man of strong religious
16 faith, he attended the Manresa Jesuit Retreat in Convent,
17 Louisiana, for 17 years, often accompanied by his sons,
18 sons-in-law, and grandsons; and

19 WHEREAS, A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Joe
20 Tortorice Sr. was a loving patriarch who was affectionately known
21 as "Pop" to his family and as "Big Joe" to his other family at
22 Jason's Deli; in spite of the physical hardships of his final years,
23 this warm and witty man lived life to the fullest right to the end,
24 and the memory of his determination and boundless joie de vivre will
25 forever inspire all those he has left behind; now, therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
27 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Joseph Vincent

1 Tortorice Sr. and extend sincere condolences to the members of his
2 family: to his wife, Margaret Montalbano Tortorice; to his son,
3 Joseph V. Tortorice Jr., and his wife, Shelley Bill; to his
4 daughters, Judy McFarland and her husband, Larry, Pinky Carden and
5 her husband, Bill, and Suzanne Jones and her husband, Dave; to his
6 grandchildren, Joseph V. Tortorice III, Robert C. Tortorice,
7 Ashley C. Messina, Amy Srader, Cody McFarland, Lindsey Parish,
8 Polly Hixson, Kathryn Jefferson, William Carden III, Leesa Carden,
9 Julie Hebert, Ross Jones, Charlie Jones, Hunter Jones, and Taylor
10 Jones; to his great-grandchildren, Joseph, Luke, Lainey, Robert,
11 Josephine, Mary Margaret, Georgia, Olivia, Maceo, Addie, Landon,
12 Brady, Emma, Charles, Rosabelle, and Poppy Rose; and to his other
13 relatives and many friends; and, be it further

14 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
15 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
16 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Joseph
17 Vincent Tortorice Sr.