

By: Johnson

H.R. No. 662

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The passing of Dallas County Constable Cleophas
2 R. Steele Jr. on February 18, 2015, at the age of 69, concluded a
3 remarkable life of service to the North Texas community; and

4 WHEREAS, Cleo Steele was born in Dallas on July 13, 1945, the
5 son of Myrtis and Cleophas R. Steele Sr.; a graduate of the
6 University of Oklahoma, he was the first African American from
7 Dallas County to earn a juris doctor degree from the Southern
8 Methodist University School of Law; and

9 WHEREAS, Following a stint with the Dallas Legal Services
10 Project, during which he provided assistance to low-income clients
11 in civil matters, this pioneering attorney established one of the
12 first black law firms in Dallas in the early 1970s; he worked
13 concurrently for a time as an associate municipal judge, and in 1976
14 he became one of the first African American justices of the peace in
15 Dallas County; Judge Steele retired as JP in 2006, after three
16 decades in office, but his dedication to the greater good drew him
17 back to public service in 2012, when he accepted an appointment as
18 constable of Precinct 1; two years later, he won election to that
19 position; and

20 WHEREAS, A champion of social justice throughout his career,
21 Judge Steele played a role in the Tasby case, which helped to
22 desegregate area schools, and in later years, he worked with his
23 wife, Barbara, to establish the C.A.W. Clark Legal Clinic, which
24 opened in 1989; and

1 WHEREAS, Despite his many professional responsibilities,
2 Judge Steele gave generously of his time and talents to numerous
3 civic organizations, holding leadership positions in such groups as
4 the DISD Ad Hoc Committee on Institutional Racism, the Walker Fair
5 Housing Agency, the Dallas Alliance, and the Boy Scouts of America;
6 the dean of African American lawyers in Dallas, he also served as
7 president of the J. L. Turner Legal Association; in addition, he was
8 a valued member of Good Street Baptist Church, where he served on
9 the board of deacons and the board of trustees; and

10 WHEREAS, Over the years, Judge Steele received a host of
11 honors for his efforts, including the MLK Justice Award from the
12 Dallas Bar Association, the Urban League Legacy Award, and the
13 NAACP Community Service Award; and

14 WHEREAS, This devoted family man enjoyed the love and
15 encouragement of his wife, Barbara, in all of his endeavors, and he
16 took great pride in his six children, Sheri, Keffus, Sharron,
17 Cheronda, Cleophas, and Chrystal, and his grandson, Donald; and

18 WHEREAS, Admired for his consummate grace under pressure,
19 Cleo Steele made a meaningful difference in his community, and his
20 achievements as a civic leader and as a trailblazer will remain an
21 enduring source of inspiration in the years to come; now,
22 therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
24 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Cleophas R. Steele
25 Jr. and extend sincere sympathy to the members of his family: to his
26 wife, Barbara P. Steele; to his children, Sheri, Keffus, Sharron,
27 Cheronda, Cleophas, and Chrystal; to his grandson, Donald Crear

1 Jr.; to his goddaughter, J'Benet Moore; to his sister, Evelyn
2 Yvonne Steele; to his brothers, Jonathan Steele and his wife,
3 Jacquelyn, Kerry Steele and his wife, Alexis, and Basil Steele and
4 his wife, Brenda; and to his other relatives and many friends; and,
5 be it further

6 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
7 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
8 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Cleophas
9 R. Steele Jr.