

By: Paddie

H.R. No. 1609

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Wiley College debate team of Marshall won the
2 2014 Pi Kappa Delta Comprehensive National Tournament in March, and
3 this achievement indeed merits special recognition; and

4 WHEREAS, Composed of 23 first- and second-year students, the
5 team competed with the best debaters from 80 colleges and
6 universities at the largest Pi Kappa Delta tournament ever held;
7 after the winning totals were calculated, Wiley College emerged on
8 top with 60 awards; this was an impressive finish to a season that
9 included 373 tournament wins and several exhibition debates; and

10 WHEREAS, The Wiley College debate team has grown out of a rich
11 and storied past; the historically black college was founded in
12 1873 and is one of the oldest west of the Mississippi River; the
13 original debate team, which formed when Coach Melvin B. Tolson came
14 to the college in 1924, was not allowed to join Pi Kappa Delta, the
15 national forensics fraternity; nonetheless, they continued to
16 compete and in 1935 won a debate against the University of Southern
17 California, that year's Pi Kappa Delta national champions; and

18 WHEREAS, After Coach Tolson left the college in 1947, the
19 debate team disbanded; 60 years later, interest was revived when
20 Denzel Washington directed and acted in *The Great Debaters*, which
21 brought the drama of the 1935 debate team to the silver screen;
22 Mr. Washington later donated \$1 million to Wiley College, and the
23 school's debate team was reestablished and named the Melvin B.
24 Tolson/Denzel Washington Forensics Society; and

1 WHEREAS, Under the guidance of Coach Chris Medina, the 2014
2 team truly earned the title of "The Great Debaters" over the course
3 of their notable season, which also included winning the tournament
4 at the Junior Varsity National Championships; they dedicated their
5 Pi Kappa Delta victory to Coach Tolson's teams from 1924 to 1947;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, The talented young men and women of the Wiley
8 College 2014 debate team have demonstrated outstanding skill and
9 dedication, and they are a source of great pride to their families
10 and school; now, therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
12 Legislature hereby congratulate the Wiley College debate team on
13 winning the 2014 Pi Kappa Delta Comprehensive National Tournament
14 and extend to the members and Coach Medina sincere best wishes for
15 the future; and, be it further

16 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
17 prepared for the team as an expression of high regard by the Texas
18 House of Representatives.