

By: Márquez

H.R. No. 1884

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Reverend Theodore Martin Hesburgh, former
2 president of the University of Notre Dame, passed away on February
3 26, 2015, at the age of 97, bringing a great loss to higher
4 education; and

5 WHEREAS, One of the foremost educators of the past century,
6 Father Hesburgh guided Notre Dame from 1952 to 1987; he transformed
7 an institution once only known for its football team, improving
8 academic rigor by recruiting highly regarded deans and top
9 scholars; benefactors were energized by his vision of "a Catholic
10 Princeton," and he raised funds to endow professorships and
11 substantially expand the campus, doubling enrollment in the
12 process; and

13 WHEREAS, Father Hesburgh led the way for a movement among
14 Catholic colleges in the 1960s, transferring governance from the
15 church hierarchy to the laity and rebuffing attempts to abridge
16 academic freedom; he helped coordinate a "Statement on the Nature
17 of the Contemporary Catholic University" that was signed by notable
18 Catholic educators, and under his leadership, Notre Dame admitted
19 its first female students in 1972; "Father Ted" remained
20 approachable throughout his tenure, and even had chats with
21 undergraduates who climbed a fire escape to tap on his office window
22 after dark; and

23 WHEREAS, In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower named Father
24 Hesburgh as a founding member of the United States Civil Rights

1 Commission, which investigated the suppression of the African
2 American vote and other injustices; he joined hands with the
3 Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. at a rally in advance of a landmark
4 civil rights bill, and in 1970, he was chair of the commission when
5 it reported severe deficiencies in the enforcement of
6 antidiscrimination laws; as a result, aides of President Richard M.
7 Nixon pressured him to resign from the commission, but he went on to
8 serve by presidential appointment again in the Ford and Carter
9 administrations; and

10 WHEREAS, This respected moral leader was influential in
11 matters from human rights to nuclear proliferation, and he held
12 numerous papal appointments; as the Vatican's representative to the
13 International Atomic Energy Agency, he at times acted as a broker
14 between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War;
15 he was the recipient of two of this nation's highest honors, the
16 Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal; and

17 WHEREAS, Born in Syracuse, New York, on May 25, 1917,
18 Theodore Hesburgh recognized his calling early and enrolled in a
19 seminary at Notre Dame in 1934; he was ordained four years after
20 graduating from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and
21 then completed a doctorate in sacred theology at Catholic
22 University before returning to Notre Dame to teach religion; and

23 WHEREAS, Father Hesburgh built Notre Dame's reputation for
24 excellence, and he was a strong voice for positive change on the
25 national and world stage; although he will be deeply missed, his
26 enormous accomplishments will continue to resonate in the years to
27 come; now, therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 84th Texas
2 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of the Reverend Theodore
3 M. Hesburgh and extend sincere condolences to his loved ones and the
4 University of Notre Dame community; and, be it further

5 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
6 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
7 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of the
8 Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh.