

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 387

In Memory
of
Ralph Matthew Dawson

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas honors and commemorates the life of noted attorney and law professor Ralph Matthew Dawson, who died February 17, 2015, at the age of 98; and

WHEREAS, Matt Dawson was born on March 20, 1916, to Dr. Joseph Martin Dawson and Willie Turner Dawson; he graduated from Waco High School in 1933 and went on to earn a bachelor's degree and a law degree from Baylor University; and

WHEREAS, He established his first legal practice in Longview, where he dealt with a growing number of energy industry cases that were spawned by the East Texas oil boom; he was elected to the Gregg County judgeship in 1942 and became at the time the youngest person to serve on a Texas bench; and

WHEREAS, After serving in the United States Navy during World War II, he joined a Corsicana law firm that eventually became Dawson and Sodd; he was a trial lawyer with the firm for 35 years and was then named the Leon Jaworski Chair in Practice and Procedure at Baylor University Law School; and

WHEREAS, As a professor at the university, he was an inspiration to countless young law students; he became nationally renowned for the triumphs of his mock trial teams, which won numerous regional titles and two national championships; a life-size bronze statue in his likeness was placed outside the practice court classroom to honor his achievements, and a trial advocacy professorship was established in his name; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dawson retired from academia in 1983 and returned to the private practice of law; he took part in several landmark cases, notably *Pennzoil v. Texaco* and the South Texas Nuclear Project suit; his many professional honors and awards included the Texas Bar Association's designation of Outstanding 50-Year Lawyer and his induction as a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers; and

WHEREAS, He and his beloved wife of more than 60 years, the late Princess Louise Markham, raised five children and instilled in them high ethical standards, a strong commitment to educational excellence, and a philosophy of positive contribution; he was blessed with 16 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, He was a man of wisdom and strength who gave unselfishly to others and who lived his life to the fullest, and he was respected for his incisive intellect and his fierce competitive drive; and

WHEREAS, He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, and he leaves behind memories that will be treasured forever by his family and many friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 84th Legislature, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Ralph Matthew Dawson; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for his family as an expression of deepest sympathy from the Texas Senate and that when the Senate adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Ralph Matthew Dawson.

Watson, Birdwell

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on March 17, 2015, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate

Member, Texas Senate