

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 554

In Memory
of
Paul Ragsdale

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas takes great pride in paying tribute to the life and legacy of the late Paul Ragsdale; and

WHEREAS, Paul Ragsdale was a pioneering legislator who was among the first African Americans to be elected to the Texas House of Representatives since Reconstruction, and he represented Dallas for seven terms in the Texas Legislature; and

WHEREAS, Over the course of his career in the Texas House of Representatives, Mr. Ragsdale was a champion for minority representation; he wrote legislation that created an office of equal employment opportunity in the governor's office and played a central role in the East Texas Project, which cleared the way for the election of the first black county commissioners in Anderson and Nacogdoches Counties; and

WHEREAS, His experiences at The University of Texas played a part in his determination to oppose segregation; he had been refused membership in the Longhorn Band during the 1960s because he was African American; and

WHEREAS, He was still able to pursue his love of music, however, when he joined the Escorts, a group that in 1965 became the first integrated rock band to win the university's Battle of the Bands; his bandmates, who cared more about his ability to play the alto saxophone than the color of his skin, were Steve Quinn, Don Eaves, Charlie Mast, Richard Speer, Robert Miner, and Jerry Walton; and

WHEREAS, The Escorts are holding a 50th anniversary reunion of that milestone victory; despite the absence of Mr. Ragsdale, who died in 2011, his adventurous spirit, his passion for music, and his warm and enduring friendship will doubtless be fondly remembered as band members recall those times; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 84th Legislature, hereby honor the many achievements of the late Paul Ragsdale and extend to the members of the Escorts best wishes for a memorable 50th anniversary reunion; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared in honor of the many contributions of Paul Ragsdale.

Nichols

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 13, 2015, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate