

By: Rodriguez of Travis

H.R. No. 276

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The city of Austin lost a zealous guardian of its
2 eccentricity with the death of beloved *Austin American-Statesman*
3 columnist John Kelso on July 28, 2017, at the age of 73; and

4 WHEREAS, While not a Texas native, Mr. Kelso was a natural
5 Austinite, and his keen appreciation of the city's qualities and
6 quirks won the allegiance of longtime residents, newcomers, and
7 exiles alike; he wrote with wit, perspicacity, and, as necessary,
8 supreme indignation, prompting many readers to turn to his column
9 before going back to peruse the rest of the paper; he profiled
10 weirdos, poked fun at politicians, grouched about Californians and
11 condos, and found singular humor in encounters with everyday
12 people, from his South Austin neighbors to the denizens of the
13 Poodle Dog Lounge on North Burnet Road; and

14 WHEREAS, Mr. Kelso was born in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, a state
15 he loved to mock, especially in advance of the annual Texas-OU game;
16 after growing up in Maine, he graduated from the journalism school
17 at the University of Missouri, although he didn't bother to obtain
18 the actual diploma until 2016, when his commencement ceremony was
19 conducted at Giddy Ups Saloon; he began his career in New Hampshire
20 at the *Manchester Union-Leader* and then the *Portsmouth Herald*;
21 while serving in the U.S. Army, he penned a humor column for the
22 troop newspaper, and his comedic sense served him well again at *The*
23 *Palm Beach Post*, where his scant knowledge of hunting and fishing
24 did not deter him from taking on the outdoor beat; he turned the

1 assignment into an opportunity to interview memorable Florida
2 characters, and his appreciative editor, having moved on to Austin,
3 hired him at the *American-Statesman* in 1976; and

4 WHEREAS, For four decades, Mr. Kelso continued to amuse,
5 entertain, enlighten, and much to his delight, occasionally
6 infuriate the paper's subscribers; he published three books and
7 earned numerous accolades, among them the 2005 National Press Club
8 Angele Gingras Humor Award; theoretically, he retired in 2011, but
9 despite failing health, he continued to write his columns until
10 shortly before his death; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Kelso was devoted to his wife, Kay, and his
12 stepdaughters, Lauren Williams and Rachel Cavin; a man of great
13 kindness and warmth, he enjoyed many lasting friendships and a very
14 special connection with his loyal readers, for whom his passing
15 marks the end of an era in Austin; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas
17 Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the life of
18 John Kelso and extend sincere condolences to all who mourn his
19 passing; and, be it further

20 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
21 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
22 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of John Kelso.