

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 118

In Memory  
of  
Mark Wells White Jr.

**WHEREAS**, The Senate of the State of Texas joins Texans across the state in mourning the loss of Mark Wells White Jr., who died August 5, 2017, at the age of 77; and

**WHEREAS**, Governor White served the people of Texas with dedication and integrity over the course of an exceptional career in public service that spanned many years; a conservative Democrat and a highly respected state leader and politician, Mark White served with distinction as Texas' secretary of state, attorney general, and governor; during his governorship, he was noted for championing political and educational reform and for making inclusiveness a high priority in all facets of life in Texas; and

**WHEREAS**, Mark White was born March 17, 1940, in Henderson, Texas, and he grew up in Houston; he attended Baylor University, where he earned degrees in business administration and law, and where he also met his beloved wife, Linda Gale White; and

**WHEREAS**, He began his career in statewide office at the age of 32, when he was appointed by Governor Dolph Briscoe in 1973 to be Texas secretary of state; in 1978, at the age of 37, he was elected attorney general; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1982, he defeated the incumbent governor, Bill Clements, to become the state's 43rd governor; during his term in office, from 1983 to 1987, he was a powerful advocate for transforming the state's educational system, and he pushed through a \$4 billion tax and fee increase to pay for improvements in the state's public schools; an innovative and, at the time, controversial aspect of his reform efforts was the implementation of "no pass, no play," a measure that required students to be passing all their classes in order to participate in extracurricular activities; the measure endured a firestorm of criticism and became a valued and integral part of the Texas educational system that remains in place today; and

**WHEREAS**, Other features of his significant and successful public school initiatives were reductions in class size, a 26 percent increase in funding to equalize statewide education spending, and the implementation of statewide testing standards; a number of states across the nation adopted into their educational systems many of Governor White's groundbreaking initiatives; and

**WHEREAS**, During Governor White's tenure, he grappled with the state's struggling economy due to disruptions in the oil market and the collapse of the savings and loan industry, which led to drastically reduced revenues for the state; however, he welcomed the era of new technology, and he is noted for embracing diversification of the state's economy and for the major role he played in the recruitment to Austin of the research conglomerate MCC; and

**WHEREAS**, After leaving office, he returned to the private practice of law; he also continued to be active on behalf of his fellow Texans, and he eventually began to have serious reservations about capital punishment; he urged lawmakers to

reconsider its use, and he worked with the Innocence Project on behalf of wrongfully convicted inmates; and

**WHEREAS**, A man of courage and exceptional vision, he served the people of Texas with loyalty and a commitment to fairness, and his love of this state, his many accomplishments as its governor, and his dedication to public service have had a lasting and positive impact; and

**WHEREAS**, He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, and he leaves behind memories that will be treasured forever by his family and countless friends and by all who were privileged to share in his life; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 85th Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Mark Wells White Jr.: his wife, Linda Gale Thompson White; his sons, Mark White III and Andrew White; his daughter, Elizabeth Marie White Russell; his daughters-in-law, Melanie and Stacey; his son-in-law, Seth Russell; his sister, Betty Gerlach; and his nine grandchildren; 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 Governor Mark White.

Watson

Bettencourt	Hinojosa	Perry
Birdwell	Huffines	Rodríguez
Buckingham	Huffman	Schwertner
Burton	Hughes	Seliger
Campbell	Kolkhorst	Taylor of Collin
Creighton	Lucio	Taylor of Galveston
Estes	Menéndez	Uresti
Garcia	Miles	West
Hall	Nelson	Whitmire
Hancock	Nichols	Zaffirini

Patrick, President of the Senate

---

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on August 10, 2017, by a rising vote.

---

Secretary of the Senate

---

Member, Texas Senate