

By: Smithee

H.C.R. No. 68

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The certain knowledge of a life well lived may
2 comfort those saddened by the death of Will David Davis Sr., who
3 passed away on December 12, 2016, at the age of 87; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Houston on July 18, 1929, Will Davis was the
5 son of David Davis and Nita Barnett Davis; in 1934, he moved to
6 Austin with his mother, and five years later, when he was only nine,
7 he became the youngest page to serve the Texas Legislature; he
8 worked during three sessions to help provide for his family; and

9 WHEREAS, After graduating from Austin High School, Mr. Davis
10 went on to play football for Lamar University and then Baylor
11 University, where he completed his bachelor's and law degrees; he
12 was a member of the Baylor team that played in the 1951 Orange Bowl,
13 and he won election as president of the student body; and

14 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis was hired as an assistant attorney
15 general, and in 1957, he was appointed general counsel of the Texas
16 Department of Insurance by Governor Price Daniel; three years
17 later, he joined his uncle, W. W. Heath, as a partner in the firm
18 that became Heath, Davis, and McCalla; in 2010, he took on the role
19 of counsel to Thompson Coe, and he retired the following year; and

20 WHEREAS, Over the course of his distinguished career,
21 Mr. Davis represented major insurance companies, insurance holding
22 companies, and insurance trade associations; he became general
23 counsel for the Texas Association of Life and Health Insurers at its
24 inception in 1997, having served one of its predecessor

1 organizations for many years; in addition, he served as outside
2 general counsel and as a member of advising boards of directors and
3 management for several insurance companies; he frequently
4 represented insurance company clients before the Texas
5 Legislature, and as an insurance industry representative, he was
6 instrumental in the drafting of laws that are now part of the Texas
7 Insurance Code; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis was very engaged in the political arena,
9 and in the 1960s, he served as chair of the Texas Democratic Party
10 and of the Texas State Democratic Conventions; moreover, he was a
11 delegate to both state and national conventions and served in many
12 campaigns and on many gubernatorial inauguration committees; and

13 WHEREAS, Because his mother had been a teacher, Mr. Davis
14 felt called to support public education and professionals in the
15 field through his leadership; he was a member of the Austin
16 Independent School District Board of Trustees for 16 years and
17 served three terms as president; in 1978, he was president of the
18 National School Boards Association, and he served as an officer for
19 seven years; and

20 WHEREAS, At the state level, Mr. Davis was president of the
21 Texas Association of School Boards; he was a member of the
22 Governor's Select Committee on Public Education, which made
23 recommendations for major reforms that were adopted by the
24 legislature in the 1984 Special Session as House Bill 72; in
25 addition, he was elected to the Texas State Board of Education and
26 his tenure, which spanned more than a decade, included a term as
27 vice chair; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Davis benefited higher education as well; one of
2 the original seven founders of Austin Community College, he became
3 inaugural president of the board of trustees in 1972, and following
4 three terms, he remained a board member until 1982; during that
5 time, enrollment grew to more than 20,000 students, and today, ACC
6 is one of the largest community colleges in Texas; he was also chair
7 of the Baylor University Board of Regents from 2004 to 2006 and
8 served as a regent for almost two decades; and

9 WHEREAS, The recipient of myriad accolades for his
10 professional and civic accomplishments, Mr. Davis was accorded
11 Baylor's Distinguished Alumni Award, the Price Daniel "Pro Texana"
12 Distinguished Public Service Award, and the "Pro Texana" Award; in
13 1991, AISD paid tribute to his achievements with the opening of the
14 Will D. Davis Elementary School, and nine years later, the Texas
15 Association of School Boards named its office the Will D. Davis
16 Building; the Insurance Council of Texas presented him with its
17 Raymond Mauk Award for leadership in 2010, and two years later,
18 TALHI conferred on him its first Will Davis Leadership Award; and

19 WHEREAS, A devoted family man, Mr. Davis shared a rewarding
20 marriage of 57 years with Ann Byargeon Davis before her passing; he
21 took great pride in his children, Lisa Davis, Lynn Davis Walker, and
22 Will Davis Jr., as well as in his nine grandchildren, Katelyn
23 Baroch, Allie Frazier, Becca Jahnke, Bill Walker III, Davis Walker,
24 Natalie Betzer, Will Davis III, Emily Boone, and Sara Regan, and
25 five great-grandchildren, Davis and Blake Baroch, Annaleigh
26 Frazier, Mary Carson Walker, and William "Liam" A. Walker IV; he was
27 a valued member of Hyde Park Baptist Church and taught young married

1 couples in Sunday school for many years; and

2 WHEREAS, Will Davis left a lasting imprint on the Lone Star
3 State through his outstanding contributions, and although he is
4 deeply missed by those he left behind, they will continue to find
5 inspiration in his irreproachable character and his dedication to
6 his family, his faith, and his fellow citizens; now, therefore, be
7 it

8 RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas
9 hereby pay tribute to the memory of Will David Davis Sr. and extend
10 sincere sympathy to his loved ones; and, be it further

11 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
12 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
13 Representatives and Senate adjourn this day, they do so in memory of
14 Will David Davis Sr.