

By: Davis of Harris

H.R. No. 127

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The life of a distinguished, world-renowned heart
2 surgeon drew to a close with the death of Dr. Denton Cooley of
3 Houston on November 18, 2016, at the age of 96; and

4 WHEREAS, Denton Arthur Cooley was born in Houston on August
5 22, 1920, to Mary and Ralph Cooley; he graduated from San Jacinto
6 High School and attended The University of Texas on a basketball
7 scholarship, competing on the team that won the Southwest
8 Conference championship in 1939; and

9 WHEREAS, After earning a degree in zoology in 1941,
10 Dr. Cooley began his medical training at The University of Texas
11 Medical Branch at Galveston and completed it at the Johns Hopkins
12 University School of Medicine in Baltimore, where he graduated with
13 highest honors in 1944; from 1946 to 1948, he served as a military
14 doctor in Linz, Austria, before returning to Baltimore; there he
15 met his future wife, a surgical nurse named Louise Thomas, and they
16 were married in 1949; the couple shared 67 years together, until her
17 death in October 2016, just one month before his; and

18 WHEREAS, Dr. Cooley completed his surgical residency under
19 Dr. Alfred Blalock, whom he assisted during the first "blue-baby"
20 operation; he went on to work at the Brompton Hospital in London,
21 taking part in the first intracardiac operations in England;
22 Dr. Cooley then returned to Houston, and for 18 years, he served as
23 a professor of surgery at the Baylor College of Medicine; in 1962,
24 he founded the Texas Heart Institute at St. Luke's Episcopal

1 Hospital, and he was surgeon-in-chief there for more than four
2 decades, performing operations until he was 87 years old and
3 continuing to make rounds until the final year of his life; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Cooley greatly contributed to the development
5 of groundbreaking heart and cardiovascular surgical techniques,
6 including a method of reducing the need for blood transfusions
7 during open-heart surgeries as well as procedures for the repair
8 and replacement of heart valves and the treatment of cardiac
9 anomalies in children; in 1968, he performed the first successful
10 human heart transplant in the United States, and in 1969, he became
11 the first to implant an artificial heart in a human being; over the
12 years, he took part in some 120,000 open-heart surgeries; and

13 WHEREAS, Among his peers, Dr. Cooley was greatly admired for
14 his speed, dexterity, and grace under pressure; after watching him
15 operate, the great South African heart surgeon Dr. Christiaan
16 Barnard wrote, "It was the most beautiful surgery I had ever seen";
17 Dr. Cooley authored more than 1,400 scientific papers and 12 books,
18 including *100,000 Hearts: A Surgeon's Memoir*, and he was an
19 influential mentor to countless younger surgeons, some of whom went
20 on to found the Denton A. Cooley Cardiovascular Surgical Society;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Cooley was recognized with honorary degrees
23 from many American and foreign universities and with prestigious
24 awards from surgical societies around the world; among the
25 facilities that bear his name are the student fitness center at
26 Johns Hopkins, the animal hospital at the Houston Zoo, the UT
27 basketball pavilion and student center, and a building at the UT

1 School of Dentistry at Houston; moreover, he received the Theodore
2 Roosevelt Award from the National Collegiate Athletic Association,
3 the National Medal of Technology from President Bill Clinton, and
4 the nation's highest civilian honor, the Medal of Freedom, from
5 President Ronald Reagan; and

6 WHEREAS, A man of boundless energy and good humor, Dr. Cooley
7 delighted in the time he spent with his family at his Cool Acres
8 Ranch along the Brazos River, his water-ski shack on the San Jacinto
9 River, and his "CooleyBunkport" beach house in Galveston; he was
10 the proud father of five daughters, Mary Craddock, Susan Cooley,
11 Louise Davis, Helen Fraser, and the late Florence Talbot Cooley,
12 and his life was further enriched by his 16 grandchildren and 16
13 great-grandchildren; and

14 WHEREAS, Over the course of a long and extraordinary career,
15 Denton Cooley dedicated himself to pioneering techniques that have
16 saved countless lives in operating theaters around the world, and
17 his passion, commitment, and innovation will continue to inspire
18 generations of surgeons who will remain forever in his debt; now,
19 therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas
21 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Dr. Denton Cooley
22 and extend sincere sympathy to his family and many friends; and, be
23 it further

24 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
25 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
26 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Dr. Denton
27 Cooley.