

By: Bernal

H.R. No. 1029

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, A rich and purposeful life drew to a close with the  
2 death of educator, musician, and community activist Mariana Ornelas  
3 of San Antonio on March 6, 2017, at the age of 67; and

4           WHEREAS, Mariana Ornelas was born to Thalia Girdis Sculos in  
5 Framingham, Massachusetts, on September 18, 1949; after earning a  
6 bachelor's degree in Spanish and French from Marietta College in  
7 1971, she studied Latin American literature at the Universidad  
8 Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City and fell in love with  
9 Latin culture; for five years, she lived in Paraguay, where she  
10 learned to play the harp; and

11           WHEREAS, Returning to the United States, Ms. Ornelas studied  
12 public policy and citizen participation at Tufts University; it was  
13 there that she met Willie Velasquez, the founder of the Southwest  
14 Voter Registration Education Project, and after earning her  
15 master's degree in 1982, she moved to San Antonio to work for the  
16 organization; and

17           WHEREAS, Ms. Ornelas lived most of the rest of her life in San  
18 Antonio, and as a professor of humanities and sociology at Palo Alto  
19 College from 1997 until 2016, she taught the school's first Mexican  
20 American women's studies courses and introduced her students to  
21 civic and political leaders and musicians; and

22           WHEREAS, Active in the community, Ms. Ornelas served on the  
23 boards of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center and other  
24 organizations; she was a cofounder and president of the Dellview

1 Area Neighborhood Association, and later in life, she returned to  
2 the study of the harp, often sharing her music with appreciative  
3 audiences at churches and in nursing homes; and

4 WHEREAS, A gifted scholar and musician and a passionate  
5 advocate for social justice, Mariana Ornelas devoted her life to  
6 furthering the ideals she held dear, and she leaves behind a record  
7 of compassion and civic engagement that will continue to inspire  
8 all who knew her; now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas  
10 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Mariana Ornelas and  
11 extend heartfelt sympathy to her uncle, Constantine Rockas, to her  
12 aunt, Dorothea Fotis, and to her other relatives and many friends;  
13 and, be it further

14 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
15 prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of  
16 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Mariana  
17 Ornelas.