

By: Hinojosa

H.R. No. 1524

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Dr. William Charles Akins, an esteemed educator and
2 a central figure in the integration of Austin schools, passed away
3 on March 29, 2017, at the age of 84; and

4 WHEREAS, A lifelong resident of East Austin, Charles Akins
5 was born on November 9, 1932, to Elmer and Mattie Lee Akins; after
6 graduating from the original L. C. Anderson High School in 1950, he
7 received a bachelor's degree from Huston-Tillotson College in 1954;
8 he later obtained a master's degree from Prairie View A&M
9 University and an administrative certification from Southwest
10 Texas State University; in 1982, he was awarded an honorary
11 doctorate of humane letters from Huston-Tillotson; and

12 WHEREAS, Charles Akins began his career in 1956 at Booker T.
13 Washington High School in Marlin, teaching history, civics, and
14 economics; he went on to join the faculty of his alma mater, L. C.
15 Anderson, in 1959, and just three years later, he was named Teacher
16 of the Year; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1964, the effort to integrate the Austin
18 Independent School District began in earnest, and Dr. Akins was
19 selected as the first African American teacher in the newly
20 desegregated Johnston High School, where he taught social studies,
21 sponsored the Boys Service Club, and earned promotion to Dean of
22 Boys; he returned to L. C. Anderson to serve as assistant principal
23 in 1969, but when the school was closed following a court
24 desegregation order, he transferred to Lanier High; and

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Akins became the first principal of the new
2 L. C. Anderson High School, which opened its doors in 1973;
3 presiding over a diverse student body, he viewed the success of his
4 tenure as vital to the cause of integration, and he worked hard to
5 ensure fairness and harmony whenever challenges arose; he served
6 nine years in that role and led the school to excellence in
7 academics, performing arts, and other areas before accepting a
8 promotion to assistant superintendent and later to associate
9 superintendent for community relations; and

10 WHEREAS, Acknowledging Dr. Akins's significant
11 contributions in the field of education, the Austin ISD board voted
12 in 1998 to rename the district's newest high school in his honor,
13 and W. Charles Akins High opened in 2000, the same year that
14 Dr. Akins concluded his 44 years of service to Texas
15 schoolchildren; in his retirement, he remained active in the local
16 school system, giving generously of his time and expertise to the
17 boards of the Region 13 Education Service Center, the UIL
18 Foundation, and other organizations; his civic involvement also
19 included serving as president of the Capital City Lions Club and as
20 chapter president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity and holding
21 membership on several local bond issue committees; and

22 WHEREAS, Devoted to his family, Dr. Akins enjoyed a rewarding
23 marriage with his wife, Estella, whom he had met as a student at
24 Huston-Tillotson, and he was further blessed with two daughters,
25 Dianne and Joyce, and two grandchildren, Justin and Rena; he loved
26 taking his family on cross-country trips to visit relatives in
27 California as well as on vacations to historical sites; sustained

1 by a deep faith, he was a valued congregant of Wesley United
2 Methodist Church and served as a delegate to the General and
3 Jurisdictional Conferences for the United Methodist Church; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Charles Akins was a man of quiet strength and
5 exceptional character, traits that made him a beacon of inspiration
6 during a pivotal time in the history of Austin, and he leaves behind
7 a legacy that will resonate long into the future; now, therefore, be
8 it

9 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas
10 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Dr. William Charles
11 Akins and extend sincere condolences to all who mourn his passing;
12 and, be it further

13 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
14 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
15 Representatives adjourns on this day, it do so in memory of
16 Dr. Charles Akins.