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By:  Howard H.R. No. 999

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Texans lost a tireless champion of higher education with the death of former University of Texas at Austin president William C. Powers Jr. on March 10, 2019, at the age of 72; and

WHEREAS, A member of the UT School of Law faculty for more than four decades, Bill Powers took the helm of the university in 2006; he implemented sweeping reform of the undergraduate curriculum, including the creation of mandatory signature courses for freshmen, and he guided the establishment of both the School of Undergraduate Studies and the Dell Medical School, the first new medical school at a tier one public university in decades; his commitment to increasing the four-year graduation rate brought a dramatic improvement, from about 50 percent to nearly 70 percent; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Powers strived to make the university more efficient and accountable while also raising $3.1 billion through his eight-year Campaign for Texas; in addition, he launched the ESPN-owned Longhorn Network, which is expected to generate $300 million over 20 years, much of that for the endowment of faculty chairs; under his leadership, the construction of 13 major buildings was commenced or completed; he established a vice presidency to oversee diversity and community engagement, and he was a stalwart advocate for the use of race and ethnicity as one factor in admissions, pursuing the *Fisher* affirmative action case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and winning a landmark ruling; moreover, he was a fierce defender of the academic values and world-changing research that made his institution a "university of the first class"; he enjoyed a sterling reputation in the higher education community, and in 2013, he was elected chair of the Association of American Universities, which represents the top research universities in the U.S. and Canada; when he stepped down as UT president two years later, his administration ranked as the second-longest in UT history; and

WHEREAS, Born in Los Angeles in 1946, Mr. Powers was the son of Mildred Rose Powers and William Charles Powers Sr.; he grew up in Southern California and earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of California, Berkeley; after serving in the U.S. Navy for three years, he graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School, where he was managing editor of the Harvard Law Review; he clerked for a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and taught at the University of Washington, the University of Michigan, and Southern Methodist University before joining the UT Law faculty in 1977; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Powers became one of the nation's foremost experts on torts, and he was appointed by the prestigious American Law Institute as Reporter for *Restatement (Third) for Torts*, the most important text for practitioners in that field; his outstanding work then prompted the ALI to name him the R. Ammi Cutter Reporter; the author of numerous other articles and books on tort law and legal philosophy, he was much in demand as a consultant on a wide range of complex tort cases, and he argued 50 cases before the Texas Supreme Court; at the same time, his teaching and mentorship influenced generations of attorneys; and

WHEREAS, While serving as dean of the law school, Mr. Powers was appointed to Enron's board of directors to lead an internal probe of the company's financial dealings and its ultimate collapse; his exhaustive report became a road map for more than a dozen congressional and executive branch investigations of corporate malfeasance, and it resulted in criminal prosecutions; in the wake of the scandal, Congress passed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act to strengthen financial and securities regulations; and

WHEREAS, After leaving UT, Mr. Powers became of counsel to the Jackson Walker law firm, where he generously shared his knowledge with newly minted attorneys and seasoned professionals alike; he was the recipient of many accolades, among them the Robert B. McKay Award from the American Bar Association and the French Order of the Légion d'Honneur, and he was selected as the 2014 Alumnus of the Year by UC-Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, Bill Powers was a brilliant attorney, leading legal scholar, and visionary standard-bearer for higher education, and although he will be deeply missed by all who were privileged to share in the richness of his life, he has left an indelible imprint on both the practice of law and the educational landscape; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Bill Powers and extend sincere sympathy to the members of his family: to his wife of 36 years, Kim Heilbrun; to his children, Matt, Kate, Allison, Annie, and Reid Powers; to his sister, Susan Powers; to his six grandchildren; and to all who mourn his passing; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Bill Powers.