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By:  Cole H.R. No. 1479

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Austin residents lost an admired publisher and social justice advocate with the passing of Akwasi Rozelle Evans on April 8, 2019, at the age of 70; and

WHEREAS, Born Larry Elvis Dale in Dayton, Ohio, on October 17, 1948, Akwasi Evans was the son of Garfield Evans and Bonnie Dale; he was raised in Kentucky by his mother and his adored maternal grandmother, Bertha, whom he affectionately called "Mama Bill"; in the 1980s, he moved to Texas, and he chose a new name, including Akwasi, the Ashanti word for "born on a Sunday," and Rozelle, for his maternal grandfather; he studied journalism at Texas State University and went on to work at the Texas Employment Commission and the *Villager* newspaper; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, Mr. Evans launched his own newspaper, *NOKOA The Observer*, with a dual Swahili and English title; the publication covered progressive politics and championed activism from an Afrocentric perspective for a multicultural audience; despite an increasingly challenging media environment, he continued to produce the paper for more than three decades; in addition, he cohosted a weekly talk show, *The Breakfast Club*, on FM radio station KAZI; he was a member of the Texas Publishers Association, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, and Alpha Phi Alpha; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Evans served his fellow citizens in numerous other capacities as well; he was a member of the board of the Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex, and he worked tirelessly to ensure greater representation for African Americans in Austin's civic life, particularly in regard to development issues; moreover, he enhanced cultural awareness by lecturing at area universities, reciting poetry, and organizing celebrations for Kwanzaa, Black History Month, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day; and

WHEREAS, Deeply devoted to his family and his community, Akwasi Evans made a meaningful difference in the lives of his loved ones and fellow citizens alike, and his contributions will be fondly remembered for years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Akwasi Rozelle Evans and extend sincere condolences to the members of his family: to his daughter, Sherilyn R. Scott-Blackburn, and her husband, Kirk Angelo Blackburn; to his grandchildren, Dainisha Tache' Scott, Taylor D'Angela Blackburn, Hren D'Angelo Blackburn, and Jordan O'rion Blackburn; to his great-grandsons, Prince Jayson-Alexander Trahan and Caspian De'Marcus Graham; and to his other relatives and friends; 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 Akwasi Evans.