

By: Cole

H.R. No. 133

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, A full and inspiring life drew to a close with the
2 death of beloved Austin supercentenarian Richard A. Overton on
3 December 27, 2018, at the age of 112; and

4 WHEREAS, The grandson of slaves, Richard Overton was born to
5 Gentry Overton Sr. and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Franklin in St. Mary's
6 Colony in Bastrop County on May 11, 1906; he grew up with three
7 brothers, Hilliard, Irwin, and Gentry, and six sisters, Annie,
8 Lola, Dora, Lillie Mae, Tenola, and Geneva; a hard worker, he held
9 numerous jobs in his youth, from landscaper and homebuilder to
10 furniture store employee; after enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1942,
11 he was deployed to the Pacific theater; his all-African American
12 battalion, the 1887th Engineer Aviation Battalion, helped free the
13 island of Angaur from Japanese forces; he was recognized for his
14 expert marksmanship and attained the rank of corporal; and

15 WHEREAS, Mr. Overton returned to Austin in 1945 and built a
16 house on Hamilton Avenue, where he resided for the rest of his life;
17 he went back to work in the furniture business, and for many years
18 he was employed by the Texas Treasury Department; while Ann
19 Richards led the agency, the gregarious veteran formed a friendship
20 with the future governor, and he liked driving huge deposits to the
21 bank in a golf cart; he kept busy selling fruit and mowing lawns as
22 well; and

23 WHEREAS, Following his retirement, Mr. Overton became a
24 local legend, watching over his neighbors and greeting them from

1 his front porch; his circle of admirers continued to widen, and in
2 2013, he was lauded by President Barack Obama at a Veterans Day
3 ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery; that same year, the Austin
4 City Council proclaimed his birthday Richard A. Overton Day, and in
5 2017 the city conferred the honorary name Richard Overton Avenue on
6 his block; when Governor Greg Abbott presented the Overton family
7 with a Texas flag in Mr. Overton's honor, he shared stories of how
8 the centenarian had challenged him to a wheelchair race; in his
9 later years, Mr. Overton continued to enjoy attending Shoreline
10 Church, caring for his cats, and indulging in whiskey, coffee, ice
11 cream, and cigars, and he happily welcomed visitors from near and
12 far to his front-yard birthday parties; and

13 WHEREAS, Richard Overton gained international fame as the
14 oldest living U.S. veteran, but it was his charm, wit, kindness, and
15 optimism that won the hearts of his fellow Texans, and he will be
16 remembered with great admiration and affection by all who were
17 fortunate enough to know him; now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas
19 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Richard A. Overton and
20 extend sincere condolences to all who mourn his passing; and, be it
21 further

22 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
23 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
24 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Richard A.
25 Overton.