

By: Wu

H.R. No. 914

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The State of Texas lost an esteemed lawmaker and
2 dedicated public servant with the death of former State
3 Representative and Harris County Commissioner Tom Bass on March 3,
4 2019, at the age of 92; and

5 WHEREAS, A third-generation Houstonian, Tom Bass was born to
6 Mary Lee Scoggins Bass and Thomas Hutcheson Bass on January 11,
7 1927; he enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1944, and although World War
8 II soon ended, he remained in the Army Reserve until 1980, rising to
9 the rank of colonel; after graduating from The University of Texas
10 in 1950, he married his sweetheart, the former Mary Ann King, and
11 they became the parents of 10 children, Martin Gerard, who
12 predeceased him, and Patty, Paul, Rita, Amy, Vicki, Bob, Dan,
13 Laura, and David; and

14 WHEREAS, Representative Bass began his career in education
15 with the Houston Independent School District, and following his
16 graduate studies, he taught political science at Dominican College
17 and the University of St. Thomas; his interest in politics led him
18 to run for office, and in 1962, he won election to the Texas House of
19 Representatives from Harris County; he chaired the committees on
20 school districts, narcotics investigating, interim activities, and
21 juvenile crime and delinquency and served on a number of others;
22 during the 62nd Legislature, he was a founding member of the "Dirty
23 Thirty," who crossed party lines to force out several prominent
24 state leaders enmeshed in the Sharpstown stock-fraud scandal; he

1 worked tirelessly to promote civil rights and to ensure that the
2 redistricting process gave a voice to previously disenfranchised
3 African American and Latino voters; and

4 WHEREAS, Following a decade in the legislature,
5 Representative Bass was elected to the Harris County Commissioners
6 Court; he fostered greater transparency, persuading the court to
7 publish meeting agendas; recognizing the challenges population
8 growth would bring, he spearheaded county efforts to buy up
9 flood-prone land, leading to the creation of parks and green belts;
10 in addition, he took a proactive approach to building
11 transportation and health care infrastructure; he was also aware of
12 changing demographics, and following the 1980 census, he pushed his
13 colleagues to redraw the county precinct boundaries to ensure
14 Precinct 1 was majority-minority; in 1985, he stepped down in order
15 to clear the way for African American candidates; and

16 WHEREAS, Representative Bass continued to work in behalf of
17 his fellow citizens, bringing the state's first 9-1-1 District to
18 the county; in recognition of his contributions, the county named
19 Tom Bass Regional Park and the Greater Harris 9-1-1 critical call
20 center building in his honor; and

21 WHEREAS, A longtime member of Corpus Christi Catholic Church,
22 Representative Bass served as a lector, Eucharistic minister, and
23 member of the pastoral council; he was an avid runner, and he won
24 hundreds of age awards and competed in three Boston Marathons and
25 dozens of other long-distance races; into his 80s, he competed at
26 all levels of the Senior Olympics; he had friends of all ages and
27 played for pennies with his regular poker group; above all, he

1 enjoyed spending time with a large extended family, including 23
2 grandchildren and 2 great-granddaughters, as well as many cousins;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, Gentle, kind, and unassuming, Tom Bass always looked
5 out for those most vulnerable and sought to make democracy more
6 responsive and representative; he addressed issues at the state and
7 local levels with vision and principled leadership, and he will be
8 remembered with deep admiration and affection by all who were
9 fortunate enough to know him; now, therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas
11 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of the Honorable Tom Bass
12 and extend sincere condolences to his loved ones; 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 this day, it do so in memory of former
16 State Representative Tom Bass.