

By: Landgraf

H.R. No. 942

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, A life of extraordinary achievement drew to a close  
2 with the passing of the Honorable John F. "Jack" Onion Jr. of Austin  
3 on September 2, 2018, at the age of 93; and

4           WHEREAS, Born on March 27, 1925, in San Antonio, Jack Onion  
5 was the son of Judge John F. Onion and Harriet Onion and the  
6 grandson of former state representative John Frank Onion; after  
7 graduating from Thomas Jefferson High School, he enlisted along  
8 with his twin brother, James, in the United States Marine Corps,  
9 where he served our country during the invasion of Okinawa and the  
10 occupation of Japan at the end of World War II; upon returning home  
11 from the war, he pursued his childhood dream to become an attorney  
12 by graduating from Trinity University and The University of Texas  
13 School of Law; and

14           WHEREAS, A dedicated public servant, Judge Onion joined the  
15 Bexar County District Attorney's Office and went on to become chief  
16 of its civil division; in 1954, at the age of 29, he was elected a  
17 justice of the peace in Bexar County, where he brought to Texas its  
18 first ever medical examiner's office; continuing his success in the  
19 Texas judiciary, he won his campaign to preside over Bexar County  
20 Criminal District Court No. 2, making him the youngest elected  
21 district judge in the state at the time; and

22           WHEREAS, In 1966, Judge Onion was elevated to a seat on the  
23 Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the state's highest criminal  
24 court; he subsequently became the first elected presiding judge of

1 the court, after that position was made an elective office through  
2 passage of a constitutional amendment, and he would go on to serve  
3 in that capacity for 18 years; during his tenure, he authored around  
4 1,500 signed and published majority opinions; following his  
5 retirement, he continued to share his legal expertise for many  
6 years as a visiting judge in trial and appellate courts; and

7 WHEREAS, In all his endeavors, Judge Onion enjoyed the love  
8 and support of his wife, Nancy Lee Vogelsang Onion, his longtime  
9 partner in public service and family life; the couple were the  
10 devoted parents of three children, John, David, and Carol, and they  
11 were further blessed with six grandchildren, Kate, Frances, John,  
12 Scott, Paige, and Case; admired for his warmth, geniality, and good  
13 humor, as well as his great wisdom, Judge Onion always had a joke or  
14 anecdote ready to put a matter into perspective; and

15 WHEREAS, A towering figure in the history of Texas criminal  
16 law jurisprudence, Judge Onion had a love of the law and a  
17 determination to reach the right answer in every case, and his  
18 legacy will live on in his many contributions to his profession and  
19 in the cherished memories of his loved ones, friends, and  
20 colleagues; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas  
22 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of the Honorable John F.  
23 Onion Jr. and extend deepest condolences to his relatives and  
24 friends; and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
26 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of  
27 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Judge John

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1 F. Onion Jr.