

By: Cole

H.R. No. 1479

R E S O L U T I O N

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

4 WHEREAS, Born Larry Elvis Dale in Dayton, Ohio, on October
5 17, 1948, Akwasi Evans was the son of Garfield Evans and Bonnie
6 Dale; he was raised in Kentucky by his mother and his adored
7 maternal grandmother, Bertha, whom he affectionately called "Mama
8 Bill"; in the 1980s, he moved to Texas, and he chose a new name,
9 including Akwasi, the Ashanti word for "born on a Sunday," and
10 Rozelle, for his maternal grandfather; he studied journalism at
11 Texas State University and went on to work at the Texas Employment
12 Commission and the *Villager* newspaper; and

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

23 WHEREAS, Mr. Evans served his fellow citizens in numerous
24 other capacities as well; he was a member of the board of the

1 Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex, and he worked tirelessly to
2 ensure greater representation for African Americans in Austin's
3 civic life, particularly in regard to development issues; moreover,
4 he enhanced cultural awareness by lecturing at area universities,
5 reciting poetry, and organizing celebrations for Kwanzaa, Black
6 History Month, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day; and

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

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

20 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
21 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
22 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Akwasi
23 Evans.