

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Dr. Robert Keith Pendergrass of Austin passed away  
2 on June 21, 2018, at the age of 93, leaving his loved ones to reflect  
3 on a life of meaningful accomplishments and dedicated service to  
4 his country; and

5           WHEREAS, The son of Lee Roy and Helena Slezinsky Pendergrass,  
6 Robert Pendergrass was born in Kingsville on September 15, 1924,  
7 and he grew up with the companionship of two siblings, William and  
8 Helen; after graduating early from Crozier Technical High School in  
9 downtown Dallas, he enrolled at Texas A&M College in 1941, at age  
10 16; he was one of the few first-semester freshmen to be admitted to  
11 the college's Singing Cadets choral group, and he retained his  
12 passion for singing and music throughout his life; both he and his  
13 brother showcased their vocal talents as regular performers on the  
14 WRR Gospel Hour in Dallas; and

15           WHEREAS, On December 8, 1941, the day after the attack on  
16 Pearl Harbor, Mr. Pendergrass volunteered for service in the United  
17 States Army, which granted him a deferred induction until the end of  
18 the school year in 1942; assigned to the Medical Corps, he was sent  
19 to Ohio State University and the University of Michigan Medical  
20 School to complete his undergraduate and medical degrees; after  
21 completing his surgical residency at Baylor Hospital in Dallas, he  
22 reenlisted in the U.S. Air Force to assist in the Korean War effort;  
23 he served as chief of surgery for the 3555th Medical Group at Perrin  
24 Air Force Base in Sherman before being promoted to commander of the

1 3645th Medical Group and Hospital at Laughlin Air Force Base in Del  
2 Rio; and

3       WHEREAS, In 1953, Dr. Pendergrass entered private practice  
4 as a general family physician and surgeon in Pittsburg; he  
5 continued in that role until 1980, often treating patients on house  
6 calls, as had long been the practice in rural East Texas; during  
7 that time, he also served as medical director for the Medical and  
8 Surgical Hospital of Camp County and as a faculty member of the  
9 medical schools at Louisiana State and Vanderbilt Universities; he  
10 found great fulfillment in caring for local residents, and he also  
11 worked tirelessly to eradicate racial bigotry in the area; in 1964,  
12 he successfully ran for and served as president of the Pittsburg  
13 School Board to help ensure the full integration of the school  
14 system; and

15       WHEREAS, Dr. Pendergrass shared 67 years of marriage with his  
16 beloved wife, Mary Pendergrass; he took great pride in his four  
17 children and their spouses, Robert Keith Pendergrass and his wife,  
18 Juli, Mary Virginia Lannen and her husband, Rick, Henry Lee  
19 Pendergrass and his wife, Coleen, and Peter William Pendergrass and  
20 his wife, Desiree; with the passing years, the family grew to  
21 include nine grandchildren, Virginia, John, R. H., Anna, Sarah,  
22 Peter, Katie, Abby, and Annie, as well as three  
23 great-grandchildren; Dr. Pendergrass also welcomed into his home a  
24 Swedish exchange student, Janne Zetterqvist, who became like a son  
25 to him; and

26       WHEREAS, In 1981, Dr. Pendergrass and his wife moved to  
27 Austin, where he worked for the Texas Department of Human Resources

1 as the deputy commissioner for health policy and programs and as the  
2 special assistant for health affairs; he later became the Texas  
3 state Medicaid director, as well as vice president and medical  
4 director for the National Heritage Insurance Company and a medical  
5 advisor for Electronic Data Systems; he had the distinction of  
6 being appointed by Governor Bill Clements to the Governor's  
7 Coordinating Committee to Facilitate Organ Transplants, and he was  
8 reappointed by Governor Mark White after Governor Clements left  
9 office; and

10 WHEREAS, Deeply proud of his Texas heritage, Dr. Pendergrass  
11 was a founding member of the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum,  
12 which gave him an outlet to share the state's rich history with  
13 friends and acquaintances who visited Austin; he and his wife were  
14 also valued members of St. David's Episcopal Church; after retiring  
15 at age 72, he taught himself Spanish and took up oil painting,  
16 completing several works for his grandchildren; and

17 WHEREAS, Dr. Robert Pendergrass was admired and respected  
18 for his considerable gifts and accomplishments, as well as for his  
19 devotion to his family, state, and country, and he will forever  
20 remain a source of inspiration for those he leaves behind; now,  
21 therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas  
23 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Dr. Robert Keith  
24 Pendergrass and extend sincere sympathy to his family and friends;  
25 and, be it further

26 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
27 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of

H.R. No. 1539

1 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of  
2 Dr. Pendergrass.

Bucy

Bonnen of Brazoria	Guerra	Noble
Allen	Guillen	Oliverson
Allison	Gutierrez	Ortega
Anchia	Harless	Pacheco
Anderson	Harris	Paddie
Ashby	Hefner	Parker
Bailes	Hernandez	Patterson
Beckley	Herrero	Paul
Bell of Kaufman	Hinojosa	Perez
Bell of Montgomery	Holland	Phelan
Bernal	Howard	Price
Biedermann	Huberty	Ramos
Blanco	Hunter	Raney
Bohac	Israel	Raymond
Bonnen of Galveston	E. Johnson of Dallas	Reynolds
Bowers	J. Johnson of Dallas	Rodriguez
Buckley	Johnson of Harris	Romero, Jr.
Bucy	Kacal	Rose
Burns	King of Hemphill	Rosenthal
Burrows	King of Parker	Sanford
Button	King of Uvalde	Schaefer
Cain	Klick	Shaheen
Calanni	Krause	Sheffield
Canales	Kuempel	Sherman, Sr.
Capriglione	Lambert	Shine
Clardy	Landgraf	Smith
Cole	Lang	Smithee
Coleman	Larson	Springer
Collier	Leach	Stephenson
Cortez	Leman	Stickland
Craddick	Longoria	Stucky
Cyrrier	Lopez	Swanson
Darby	Lozano	Talarico
Davis of Dallas	Lucio III	Thierry
Davis of Harris	Martinez	Thompson of Brazoria
Dean	Martinez Fischer	Thompson of Harris
Deshotel	Metcalf	Tinderholt
Dominguez	Meyer	Toth
Dutton	Meza	Turner of Dallas
Farrar	Middleton	Turner of Tarrant
Fierro	Miller	VanDeaver
Flynn	Minjarez	Vo
Frank	Moody	Walle
Frullo	Morales	White
Geren	Morrison	Wilson
Gervin-Hawkins	Muñoz, Jr.	Wray
Goldman	Murphy	Wu
González of Dallas	Murr	Zedler
González of El Paso	Neave	Zerwas
Goodwin	Nevárez	Zwiener

H.R. No. 1539

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 1539 was unanimously adopted by a rising vote of the House on May 14, 2019.

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Chief Clerk of the House