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By:  Cole H.R. No. 88

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Residents of Austin lost an admired philanthropist, arts advocate, and civil rights activist with the death of Ada Cecilia Collins Anderson on June 2, 2021, at the age of 99; and

WHEREAS, The daughter of Walter and Cecilia Collins, the former Ada Collins was born in Pilot Knob on October 2, 1921, and grew up as the fourth of nine children; she attended Pilot Knob Elementary School, founded by her paternal grandfather, and went on to graduate from L. C. Anderson High School in Austin; after receiving her bachelor's degree in home economics from Huston-Tillotson University, she became the first African American to enroll in The University of Texas at Austin Graduate School of Library Science, and although she completed her coursework, the segregated Texas State Library refused to give her a field placement, and she was denied her diploma; she was employed as a counselor by the Texas Employment Commission and strove to improve pay and conditions for African American domestic workers; later, she taught in the Austin Independent School District, earned a master's degree in educational psychology, and became a psychometrist; in addition, she was a partner in Anderson Wormley Real Estate and Insurance Company, established by her husband, Marcellus J. "Andy" Anderson, with her assistance; and

WHEREAS, The Andersons married during World War II and became the parents of two treasured children, Sandra and Marcellus, nicknamed "Jack"; benefiting youth of color, Mrs. Anderson helped found the Austin chapter of Jack and Jill of America, and she served the organization in such offices as regional director and national corresponding secretary; she organized a successful boycott of a Whites-only skating rink in East Austin and then formed the Austin Human Relations Commission, a coalition of pastors, professors, and others determined to end segregation; and

WHEREAS, In 1982, Mrs. Anderson became the first African American to win a countywide election in the Texas capital when she joined the board of Austin Community College; committed to education and the arts, she organized and directed the Leadership Enrichment Arts Program for underserved youngsters; she co-chaired the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force for the Austin Independent School District and served on the board of Laguna Gloria Art Museum; at the behest of her friend, Lady Bird Johnson, she facilitated two exhibitions of African American art at the LBJ Library and Museum; she was also a founding member of the Austin Lyric Opera and served on gubernatorial commissions; breaking yet another barrier, she became the first African American woman to sit on a bank board in Austin; and

WHEREAS, Dedicated to their community, the Andersons helped provide affordable housing for African Americans; they were active in the Democratic Party at the local, state, and national levels and became personal friends of Governor John Connally and President Lyndon Baines Johnson; Mrs. Anderson coordinated voter registration and mobilization drives that got thousands across Texas to the polls; in addition, the Andersons were both involved in Masonry and a host of civic issues; the couple shared a fulfilling relationship of 61 years before Mr. Anderson's passing; Mrs. Anderson was also preceded in death by both her children; in memory of her daughter, she donated $3 million to Huston-Tillotson University, the largest gift in its history, for the Sandra Joy Anderson Community Health and Wellness Center; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Anderson was the recipient of myriad accolades, including an honorary doctorate from Huston-Tillotson and the Community Legacy Award and Distinguished Alumnus Award from UT; moreover, UT's Briscoe Center holds a collection of her and her husband's papers; she was inducted into both the African American Women's Hall of Fame and the Texas Black Women's Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Through her trailblazing achievements and numerous civic contributions, Ada Anderson made a lasting, positive difference in her community, and her legacy will continue to resonate in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature, 2nd Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the life of Ada Cecilia Collins Anderson and extend sincere condolences to all who mourn her passing; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Ada Cecilia Collins Anderson.