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By:  Cole H.R. No. 148

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Travis County lost a trailblazing public servant with the death of former county commissioner Ronald Knowlton Davis on February 2, 2021, at the age of 75; and

WHEREAS, A fourth-generation Austinite, Ron Davis was born to Valena A. Davis Simmons on May 10, 1945; he earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Huston-Tillotson University and, while working as a computer analyst for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, completed his master's degree in public administration at Texas State University; in 1983, he founded the East Austin Strategy Team, which successfully fought to shut down a 52-acre gasoline storage site that was polluting a residential community of color; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Davis also helped secure over $9 million to resolve flooding problems in neglected East Austin, and he was instrumental in the creation of the Austin Community College Eastview Campus; joining forces with environmentalists across the county, he vigorously supported Austin's Save Our Springs Ordinance and went door to door to explain to his neighbors how development in Southwest Austin affected them; and

WHEREAS, In 1998, Mr. Davis won election to the county commission, and for the next 18 years, he worked tirelessly to ensure Precinct 1 received its fair share of public resources for economic development, social services, and infrastructure, including more than $158 million for roads and bridges; he championed a referendum to fund construction by a nonprofit corporation of a 53-mile pipeline for a high-quality supply of drinking water to eastern Travis County; further promoting environmental justice, he offered strong opposition to the expansion of landfills and mining operations in sensitive areas, and he was involved in writing rules requiring buffer areas around solid waste facilities near schools, churches, residential areas, and water wells; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing urgent need in the county's Eastern Crescent, Mr. Davis secured affordable housing options and spearheaded an initiative to build a shelter for homeless women and children, which is now operated by the Salvation Army; he advocated powerfully for an amendment to county code that expanded emergency assistance program eligibility criteria for the elderly and people with disabilities; moreover, he took a leading role in both the establishment of Travis County health clinics and the creation of the first regional mobility authority for Central Texas; his concern for the unemployed and underemployed guided his engagement in economic development programs, such as incentives to attract new businesses; and

WHEREAS, Among many accolades, Mr. Davis received the 1992 DeWitty/Overton Award for public service from the NAACP, and he was named a Distinguished Alumnus by Texas State; and

WHEREAS, His dedication to the community was surpassed only by his devotion to his family; Mr. Davis shared a fulfilling marriage of 53 years with his wife, Annie Delois Davis, and he took great pride in their three children, Ron, Cedric, and Shaunda, and six grandchildren, Arnell, Ryon, Aaron, Cameron, Chanecia, and Cedric; sustained by a strong faith, he was a longtime member of Mount Olive Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, Through his unyielding efforts, Ron Davis made a positive difference in the lives of countless Travis County residents, and although he will be deeply missed, his exceptional contributions will continue to resonate in the years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of the Honorable Ronald Knowlton Davis and extend sincere condolences to all who mourn his passing; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Ron Davis.