87R25164 JGH-D

By:  Smithee H.R. No. 1210

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, A life dedicated to the service of his nation and his community drew to a close with the death of Randall County Judge Ernie Houdashell on November 22, 2020, at the age of 74; and

WHEREAS, Ernie Houdashell was born in Clarendon on November 21, 1946, to Ernest and Della Houdashell, and he grew up in Hedley with two sisters, Pat and Loveta; and

WHEREAS, Answering his nation's call to duty, Mr. Houdashell enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1966 and served two tours of duty in Vietnam with the 191st Assault Helicopter Company as a Huey helicopter mechanic, crew chief, and door gunner; in 1968, he received the Air Medal for flying more than 25 missions in hostile territory within a six-day period, and he was honorably discharged in February 1969; and

WHEREAS, Returning to civilian life, Mr. Houdashell was employed by Bell Helicopter for four years, and he also studied journalism at Amarillo College and earned a business degree at West Texas State University; in 1973, he joined KGNC Radio as an agricultural reporter, and he went on to cover agriculture nationally with the Radio Farm Directors; in addition, he produced a weekly agricultural report for radio stations in four states, the *American Cotton Network*; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, Mr. Houdashell embarked on a new career in politics, serving first as district director for U.S. Representative Beau Bolter and then as district director for State Representative John Smithee, a position he held until he was elected as Randall County judge in 2002; as head of the Randall County commissioners court for 18 years, he oversaw the creation of a new justice center, a new Amarillo annex, and a new fire station and events center, and he also played a leading role in the development of the Randall County Veterans Park and the Panhandle War Memorial; and

WHEREAS, In all his endeavors, Mr. Houdashell benefited from the love and support of his wife of 50 years, Sandy, and he took great pride in his three children, Scott, Clay, and Michele, and his six grandchildren, Jordyn, Beck, Alexander, Indeh, Elizabeth, and Bridger; and

WHEREAS, A devoted family man, a proud veteran, and a true champion for his community, Ernie Houdashell lived a rich and purposeful life, and he leaves behind a legacy of service to others that will continue to inspire all those who knew and loved him; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of the Honorable Ernie Houdashell and extend heartfelt sympathy to his family and many friends; 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 Ernie Houdashell.