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By:  Crockett H.R. No. 1436

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, Vikki J. Martin has greatly benefited residents of Far East Dallas as founder and executive director of the Ferguson Road Initiative; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Martin established the nonprofit organization in 1998 to engage residents in addressing crime problems that had led to urban blight, causing property values to diminish and businesses to abandon the area; the group participated in the Weed and Seed program of the U.S. Department of Justice from 2000 to 2011, "weeding" out crime and "seeding" economic development and social services; and

WHEREAS, Under the leadership of Ms. Martin, FRI has partnered with local law enforcement agencies and neighborhood organizations to reduce crime substantially, and it has pressured absentee landlords to improve substandard conditions; in addition, it has formed relationships with public schools to promote family involvement, recruit volunteers, and provide after-school programming and academic enrichment opportunities; the FRI bond committee has secured more than $40 million over the years to improve streets, bridges, and parks, mitigate flooding, and add such amenities as a branch library and recreation center; and

WHEREAS, Signs of revitalization now abound in Far East Dallas, with investment in retail and housing developments and rising property values; supporting a diverse population of more than 93,000, FRI continues to focus on quality of life while also managing programs to stabilize vulnerable families; today, FRI includes nearly 40 neighborhood associations, crime watch groups, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, An artist and retired educator, Ms. Martin taught studio art and advanced placement art history at The Episcopal School of Dallas for 34 years before her retirement in 2017; she has resided in Far East Dallas for more than three decades; and

WHEREAS, Vikki Martin has made a lasting, positive difference in her community through her vision, leadership, and unyielding dedication, and her exceptional accomplishments have earned the deep admiration and appreciation of her fellow citizens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas Legislature hereby honor Vikki J. Martin for her service as founder and executive director of the Ferguson Road Initiative and extend to her sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for Ms. Martin as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.