

By: Cole

H.R. No. 148

R E S O L U T I O N

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

4 WHEREAS, A fourth-generation Austinite, Ron Davis was born to
5 Valena A. Davis Simmons on May 10, 1945; he earned his bachelor's
6 degree in political science from Huston-Tillotson University and,
7 while working as a computer analyst for the U.S. Department of
8 Veterans Affairs, completed his master's degree in public
9 administration at Texas State University; in 1983, he founded the
10 East Austin Strategy Team, which successfully fought to shut down a
11 52-acre gasoline storage site that was polluting a residential
12 community of color; and

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

20 WHEREAS, In 1998, Mr. Davis won election to the county
21 commission, and for the next 18 years, he worked tirelessly to
22 ensure Precinct 1 received its fair share of public resources for
23 economic development, social services, and infrastructure,
24 including more than \$158 million for roads and bridges; he

1 championed a referendum to fund construction by a nonprofit
2 corporation of a 53-mile pipeline for a high-quality supply of
3 drinking water to eastern Travis County; further promoting
4 environmental justice, he offered strong opposition to the
5 expansion of landfills and mining operations in sensitive areas,
6 and he was involved in writing rules requiring buffer areas around
7 solid waste facilities near schools, churches, residential areas,
8 and water wells; and

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

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

24 WHEREAS, His dedication to the community was surpassed only
25 by his devotion to his family; Mr. Davis shared a fulfilling
26 marriage of 53 years with his wife, Annie Delois Davis, and he took
27 great pride in their three children, Ron, Cedric, and Shaunda, and

1 six grandchildren, Arnell, Ryon, Aaron, Cameron, Chanecia, and
2 Cedric; sustained by a strong faith, he was a longtime member of
3 Mount Olive Baptist Church; and

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

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

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