

By: Gervin-Hawkins

H.R. No. 2015

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The Honorable John Gallardo Benavides, the first
2 Mexican American district court judge in Bexar County, passed away
3 on January 19, 1980, at the age of 60, and the life of this
4 trailblazing jurist remains an enduring source of inspiration; and

5 WHEREAS, Born on April 17, 1919, John Benavides was an
6 eighth-generation Texan whose forebears arrived in San Antonio from
7 the Canary Islands; he graduated from Brackenridge High School in
8 the midst of the Great Depression and went on to serve in the
9 federal Soil Conservation Service; and

10 WHEREAS, During World War II, Mr. Benavides was commissioned
11 as a second lieutenant in the air force; he served as an
12 intelligence officer in China with the famed 25th Fighter Squadron,
13 14th U.S. Air Force, known as the "Flying Tigers," under the
14 leadership of General Claire Chennault, and his notable
15 accomplishments included establishing safe houses behind enemy
16 lines in Burma; he would later be buried with full military honors;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, After the war, Mr. Benavides set his sights on a
19 career in law, and he eventually gained a broad understanding of the
20 legal system through work as a prosecutor, as a defense attorney,
21 and as a justice of the peace; while in private practice, he was
22 known to waive his fees for clients who could not afford
23 representation, and his sense of fairness was also evident during
24 his prosecutorial career, when he fought to change the laws to make

1 it illegal to try an offender first as a juvenile and later as an
2 adult; and

3 WHEREAS, During more than a decade as a prosecutor,
4 Mr. Benavides tried more than 280 jury cases and established a 95
5 percent conviction record in around 50 murder trials; his successes
6 in the courtroom elevated his reputation in the legal community,
7 and on October 1, 1969, he was appointed by Governor Preston Smith
8 to Bexar County's 187th District Court, a significant milestone for
9 Mexican Americans in the county; and

10 WHEREAS, In all his endeavors, Mr. Benavides enjoyed the love
11 and support of his wife, Olivia Benavides, whom he married in 1951;
12 he was the proud father of two children, John Anthony and Patricia
13 Ann; and

14 WHEREAS, Judge John Benavides contributed immeasurably to
15 his country and his community through a lifetime of distinguished
16 service, and he leaves behind a legacy that will long be remembered;
17 now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 87th Texas
19 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the memory of Judge John Gallardo
20 Benavides and the unique contribution he made to the history of
21 Bexar County; and, be it further

22 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
23 prepared for his family and that when the Texas House of
24 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Judge John
25 Benavides.