

By: Davis

H.R. No. 97

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The city of Dallas lost an esteemed professor,
2 author, storyteller, and entrepreneur with the passing of Dr. Njoki
3 McElroy on October 16, 2023; and

4 WHEREAS, Born in Sherman in 1925, Njoki McElroy grew up in the
5 Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas; she attended segregated,
6 under-resourced public schools, but credited her supportive Black
7 teachers with enabling her to enroll in Xavier University in New
8 Orleans at the age of 16; after beginning her career as a public
9 school teacher, she earned her master's and doctoral degrees in
10 performance studies from Northwestern University; she went on to
11 teach there for over three decades, creating groundbreaking courses
12 in the performance of Black literature; in 1987, she joined the
13 Master of Liberal Studies program at Southern Methodist University;
14 adoring students nicknamed her "Queen Professor," and many of them
15 went on to become leaders in the entertainment world and other
16 fields; and

17 WHEREAS, Dr. McElroy was a prolific writer, and *The Dallas*
18 *Morning News* hailed in particular her autobiographical *1012*
19 *Natchez: A Memoir of Grace, Hardship and Love*; her short story was
20 anthologized in the critically acclaimed *From Daughters to Mothers:*
21 *I've Always Meant to Tell You*, and her plays were produced on
22 university and professional stages alike; a master storyteller, she
23 performed and conducted workshops throughout the U.S., Europe, and
24 the Caribbean, training educators in ways to engage students by

1 incorporating storytelling in their instruction; she directed
2 several productions centered on overcoming the legacy of racism in
3 Dallas, most notably 2019's *From Freedman's Town to Botham Jean:
4 Stories of Racial Healing*; as founder of the annual Back Home with
5 the Folks Festival, she provided a platform for artists in
6 marginalized neighborhoods, and she was a generous mentor to
7 countless people and raised money to support their creative
8 endeavors; and

9 WHEREAS, Abundantly talented, Dr. McElroy was also a
10 photographer and a television producer, and she and her husband
11 launched Black Fox Enterprises, a beauty company with major-market
12 distribution; following his death in 1978, she took over as
13 president/CEO; among myriad accolades, she received the
14 President's Council on Youth Opportunity Award, the NAACP Living
15 Legend Award, and a Ford Foundation Fellowship; moreover, she was
16 the treasured matriarch of a fine family that included six children
17 and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and
18 great-great-grandchildren; and

19 WHEREAS, Njoki McElroy led a rich and purposeful life, and
20 her legacy as a champion of Black culture will continue to resonate
21 for years to come; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas
23 Legislature, 3rd Called Session, hereby pay tribute to the memory
24 of Dr. Njoki McElroy and extend sincere sympathy to all who mourn
25 her passing; and, be it further

26 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
27 prepared for her family and that when the Texas House of

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1 Representatives adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Dr. Njoki
2 McElroy.