

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 188

In Memory
of
L. Clifford Davis

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas joins the people of Tarrant County in mourning the loss of the Honorable L. Clifford Davis, who died February 15, 2025, at the age of 100; and

WHEREAS, Born October 12, 1924, and raised amidst the Great Depression and Jim Crow segregation in Wilton, Arkansas, L. Clifford Davis dedicated his life to fighting for civil rights and ensuring justice for all; as a young man, he moved to Little Rock with his older siblings to attend high school, and he went on to earn a bachelor's and master's degree before pursuing his ambition to study law; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Davis was accepted to Howard University School of Law, but due to Howard's expense, he attended the University of Arkansas Law School under conditions of complete segregation; although he would complete his law degree at Howard University, he paved the way for other Black students to enter graduate programs in Arkansas, and he returned to his home state to begin his law practice; and

WHEREAS, Using *Brown v. Board of Education* as a foundation, Mr. Davis fought to desegregate schools in Arkansas, and in 1954, he passed the Texas bar exam and became one of the few Black attorneys working in Fort Worth; his efforts resulted in the integration of the Mansfield and Fort Worth school districts; in 1977, he organized the Fort Worth Black Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Judge Davis became the first appointed and elected Black district court judge in Tarrant County, which he served from 1983 until 1988; he presided over the first drug diversion court in Tarrant County and spent three decades as a visiting judge in North Texas before returning to practice law; and

WHEREAS, During his 75 years as a licensed attorney, Mr. Davis garnered many local, state, and national accolades for his contributions to his community and to the legal field, including the prestigious Blackstone Award from the Tarrant County Bar Association and an honorary doctorate of law degree from the University of Arkansas; a legal association and a Fort Worth elementary school were named in his honor; and

WHEREAS, Above all, Mr. Davis found much fulfillment in his role as a husband to his late wife, Ethel, for more than 50 years and as a loving father to his daughters, Avis and Karen; he was a devoted member of Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church; his enthusiasm for mentoring lawyers and judges, providing pro bono services, and encouraging young people in his community to pursue higher education contributed to his legacy of community service and advancing justice; and

WHEREAS, A man of integrity, courage, and generosity, L. Clifford Davis's extraordinary contributions to civil rights will long be remembered by our nation and by the people of the Lone Star

S.R. No. 188

State; his remarkable life, his outstanding achievements, and his dedication to serving others are a source of inspiration to many, and his memory will be forever treasured by his loved ones and by all who were privileged to share in his life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 89th Legislature, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of L. Clifford Davis; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for his family as an expression of deepest sympathy from the Texas Senate, and that when the Senate adjourns this day, it do so in memory of Judge Davis.

West

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on March 4, 2025, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate