

SENATE JOURNAL

EIGHTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE — FIRST CALLED SESSION

AUSTIN, TEXAS

PROCEEDINGS

THIRD DAY

(Thursday, July 22, 2021)

The Senate met at 10:00 a.m. pursuant to adjournment and was called to order by the President.

The roll was called and the following Senators were present: Alvarado, Bettencourt, Birdwell, Blanco, Buckingham, Campbell, Creighton, Eckhardt, Gutierrez, Hall, Hancock, Hinojosa, Huffman, Hughes, Johnson, Kolkhorst, Lucio, Menéndez, Miles, Nelson, Nichols, Paxton, Perry, Powell, Schwertner, Seliger, Springer, Taylor, West, Whitmire, Zaffirini.

The President announced that a quorum of the Senate was present.

Senator Hinojosa offered the invocation as follows:

Thank You, Lord, for another blessed day. We pray for Your spiritual protection. We pray that You protect us from evil. We ask that You protect our families, our neighbors, and friends, and bless us all with good health. Lord, we ask for Your divine guidance and wisdom through the many challenges we face today. Provide us the strength, the courage, and protection from every battle we face in our lives. Do not let our anger blind us as we make difficult decisions. Look over us and help us settle our differences in peace as we are family, we are friends, and we represent Texas. Every person should be treated with dignity and respect. We are all Your children, the children of God. We know that one day You will set right all injustices and wrongs. God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other, living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time, accepting hardships as a pathway to peace, taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as we would have it, trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will, so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next life. God bless us all. Amen.

Senator Whitmire moved that the reading of the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day be dispensed with and the Journal be approved as printed.

The motion prevailed without objection.

SENATE RESOLUTION 6

Senator Birdwell offered the following resolution:

SR 6, Recognizing the McLennan Community College baseball team for winning a national championship.

The resolution was read and was adopted without objection.

GUESTS PRESENTED

Senator Birdwell was recognized and introduced to the Senate McLennan Community College President Johnette McKown, Athletic Director Shawn Trochim, Head Coach Mitchell Thompson, Assistant Coach Tyler Johnson, Assistant Coach Anthony Miller, and baseball team members Miguel Santos, Will Carsten, Landry Wideman, Chase Brown, Logan Freeman, Max Hamilton, Gray Harrison, Braley Hollins, Blake Jackson, Alex Lopez, Izzy Lopez, Jared Matheson, Cash McNicholas, Ravaughn Morgan, Nick Pierce, Elijah Rodriguez, Bryson Weeks, and Jaylen Williams.

The Senate welcomed its guests.

SENATE RESOLUTION 19

Senator Powell offered the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Ms. Opal Lee of Fort Worth joined the president at the White House on June 17, 2021, to witness the signing of legislation designating Juneteenth as a federal holiday, the culmination of her many years of advocacy; and

WHEREAS, Known as "the grandmother of Juneteenth," Ms. Lee began celebrating the June 19 holiday as a girl in Marshall; her family later moved to Fort Worth, where on June 19, 1939, a mob of 500 white supremacists burned down her family's new home; rising above oppression, she embarked on a career in education and became a tireless champion for civil rights, cultural heritage, affordable housing, and food security; in retirement, she took on leadership of a food bank, which now serves some 500 families a day and grows healthy produce at an urban farm named in her honor; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Lee has organized the Juneteenth event in Fort Worth for decades, and she dreamed of making the observance that started in Texas a national celebration of freedom and unity; in 2016, at the age of 89, she launched a campaign to heighten awareness across the country, walking for 2.5-mile stretches in different cities to symbolize the 2.5-year delay in enforcing the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas; along the way, she spoke to the media and numerous groups about the meaning of Juneteenth and gathered 1.5 million signatures on a petition that she delivered to the U.S. Congress; finally, with passage of the Juneteenth legislation commemorating the end of slavery in the United States, the nation gained its first new holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was signed into law in 1983; and

WHEREAS, Long admired for her outstanding contributions to the local community, Ms. Opal Lee has now made an enduring impact at the national level, and her steadfast dedication to a vision of liberty and justice is a source of tremendous inspiration to all; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the 87th Texas Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby congratulate Ms. Opal Lee on the designation of Juneteenth as a national holiday and extend to her sincere best wishes for continued success in all her endeavors; and, be it further

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

SR 19 was read.

On motion of Senator West and by unanimous consent, the names of the Lieutenant Governor and Senators were added to the resolution as signers thereof.

On motion of Senator Powell, the resolution was adopted without objection.

GUESTS PRESENTED

Senator Powell, joined by Senators Zaffirini, Miles, Menéndez, West, Taylor, Lucio, Bettencourt, Alvarado, Hancock, Hinojosa, Gutierrez, Eckhardt, and Whitmire, was recognized and introduced to the Senate Opal Lee, joined by family members Dione Sims, Linda Hudson, JoAnn Harris, Robert Sims Jr., Robyn Sims, Braydon Harris, Sue Crosby, Ella Burton, and Bealy Reddick.

The Senate welcomed its guests.

REMARKS ORDERED PRINTED

On motion of Senator West and by unanimous consent, the remarks regarding **SR 19** were ordered reduced to writing and printed in the *Senate Journal* as follows:

Senator Powell: Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you, Miss Opal, for being here, and welcome to her family. Thank you, Madam Secretary, for reading the resolution for us in such beautiful terms today. I want to take just a second to introduce Miss Opal's family. On the floor with her today are Miss Opal and Dione Sims, her granddaughter, and Linda Hudson, as well. Thank you so much for being here. In the gallery, her family has come to support her, JoAnn Harris, Robert Sims Jr., Robyn Sims, Braydon Harris, Sue Crosby, Bella Burton, and Bealy Reddick. Thank you all for sharing this day with us today. A daughter of the State of Texas, Miss Opal Lee has been a Texas hero for decades. The grandmother of Juneteenth, as we so lovingly call her, Miss Opal is now not just a Texas treasure but a national treasure. What a treat to get to see Miss Opal receive those honors in Washington, D.C. in the White House. Did you ever think, Miss Opal, that you'd be in the White House? As a child, Miss Opal celebrated Juneteenth, a holiday not so widely known across our nation. It was a celebratory and memorable time for Miss Opal. But sadly, not all of her memories about Juneteenth were good ones. In 1939, Otis and Mattie Flake, Miss Opal's parents, bought a new home in her hometown of Fort Worth, but very sadly, not all of her neighbors were accepting of the new family in the neighborhood. An angry White mob, as Miss Opal has told me many times before, began to form around the Flakes' new home, and for three days the mob threw rocks at her family home. On the third day, when Miss Opal was only 12 years old, the mob of 500 rioters forced their way into the house, removed Opal and her family, and set fire to their family's home. That date was June 19th. Every year in Fort Worth, we gather to participate in the Juneteenth walk, and I've got to tell you that Miss Opal outwalks everybody. In

the last Juneteenth celebration I drove my car in the walk, but Miss Opal made it two and a half miles from the beginning of the parade, up and down hills, across Fort Worth, in commemoration of the two and a half years that it took for the Texas slaves in Galveston to receive the news of the Emancipation Proclamation and their resulting freedom. Miss Opal's annual Juneteenth celebration is always more than just a walk. It's a multi-day festival that includes art exhibits, children's activities. One of the first things that I did during my first campaign was to attend Miss Opal's Juneteenth celebration and to see the children participating in a music festival. They have a health and a job fair and they have lots of interactive activities that continue to grow in scope every year. In Fort Worth, we also know of Miss Opal's greater community involvement like her commitment to ending food insecurity through her work with a local food bank and her own community garden known as Opal's Farm. We also know her as an author, and she has her book here with her today, *Juneteenth*. A community volunteer, a retired school teacher, and a champion of creating economic opportunities in Fort Worth's economically depressed areas. Because of her determination, every year American people will pause now on June 19th to remember that dark part of our history and to celebrate what's possible when we unite, when we become, as Miss Opal says, one people, and when we commit to a better, brighter future that provides opportunity for all our citizens. Now, I know today that I'm not the only one here that wants to speak about Miss Opal and to greet her and her family. So, at this point in the conversation I will yield to others. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you, Senator. Senator Zaffirini, for what purpose?

Senator Zaffirini: Speak about the resolution, Mr. President.

President: You're recognized.

Senator Zaffirini: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President and Members, I, too, rise to support Senate Resolution 19, honoring a remarkable and inspiring woman, Miss Opal Lee. Because of her incredible record of accomplishments she truly is a legend in her own time. It's amazing when you look back at the history of the Civil Rights Movement how many of its leaders were and are women. We all know names like Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King, but there were many, many more. Women like Ella Baker, who mentored Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King; Daisy Bates, the driving force behind integrating an all-White high school in Little Rock by the Little Rock Nine; Fannie Lou Hamer, who dedicated her life to fighting racial injustice and promoting the African American vote in Mississippi; and Dorothy Height, an important organizer of the 1963 March on Washington and founder of the National Women's Political Caucus. Miss Opal, you can take your place in this illustrious pantheon of African American women who changed our history. You honor and inspire us by joining us in the Texas Senate. Please accept our very best wishes for total success in your future projects. We thank you. Thank you, Mr. President and Members.

President: Thank you, Senator. Senator Miles, you're recognized on the resolution.

Senator Miles: Thank you, Mr. President, Members. Members, I'm truly honored here to be in the midst of Miss Opal Lee today. She's living proof that one person can make a change in the world, make a change for the better. The fact that she pushed to

make Juneteenth a national holiday took hold when she was 89 makes her accomplishments even more greater and amazing. She completes the journey to make Juneteenth a national holiday for all Americans. Miss Opal, Representative Al Edwards was my predecessor. He was my neighbor and my fraternity brother and we were friends, and I know just how hard, in the journey that he started, on making Juneteenth a holiday. It was his legislation in 1979 that created the Juneteenth in Texas to make the first state holiday, as you know. Many states officially recognized Juneteenth over the following decades. Representative Edwards passed away last year. I wish he could have been here today to celebrate the Juneteenth as a federal holiday last month and to be here with you to honor you. Miss Opal, not only do we owe you a big gratitude of thanks for making Juneteenth a national holiday, but we also need to thank you for your career in education, your career of being a community activist, and your career, as I say on the House floor all the time, just being a big momma to the community. Ma'am, I want to share your passion. I want you to know that I share your urban passion, your passion for urban gardening as well. I love that you have been focused on improving your community. And in closing, it is the men and women of your generation that has inspired me to be involved in public service. I hope that you continue to stay involved for years to come. I'm so honored that the State of Texas, all of us present here today and myself, have an opportunity to give you your flowers while you're above earth with us today. Thank you, Ma'am.

President: Thank you, Senator West. Senator Menéndez, you're recognized on the resolution. Thank you.

Senator Menéndez: Thank you, Mr. President.

President: I'm sorry, Senator Miles, I'm sorry. I was, I was coming to Senator West next but I went to—

Senator Menéndez: Oh—

President: —Senator Menéndez.

Senator Menéndez: —would you like to go next?

President: Senator Menéndez—

Senator Menéndez: I'll be brief, thank you, Mr. President. As you can imagine, Miss Opal, so many of us, I would dare to say all of us, are inspired by you and your journey and your courage, your dedication, your commitment. It was so beautiful to see the bill signing. You and the President, the Vice President, our good friend Marc Veasey, all celebrating your life's work. And just as Senator Miles said, today we celebrate your accomplishment to help us have a national holiday. But, as he also said, what about the thousands of lives that you touched in the classroom. Thank you for being such a jewel, such an inspiration, a person that took what, obviously, what was very frightening and a time in your life with the tragedy that befell your family. They could've been a completely during turn, a bitter turn, a turn against society, a turn for the worst, but you took a horrific, tragic situation and you turned it into something so positive. So, I couldn't let this moment stop and stand without saying thank you to you and your family for your work, everything that you've done for the benefit of your community. And as you help improve the lives of the, of the people of Fort

Worth, you have an impact on the State of Texas and the nation. I dare to say you are an American hero. Thank you for your time, thank you for what you do, and we appreciate everything you've done.

President: Thank you, Senator. And now, Senator West, excuse me, you were next after Senator Miles and I jumped one name. You're recognized.

Senator West: Thank you very much, Mr. President and Members. Opal, how long have we been friends? A long time. You are due flowers today. You know, on this floor in the Senate, you have several former teachers. And two of them sit in proximity to me, Senator Paxton and Senator Nelson, Eddie Lucio. And, Members, you know, today we have celebrated national champions, Senator Birdwell. Now we celebrate another Texan who's a national treasure. That's Opal Lee. You know, I want your great-great-grandson, if at all, Mr. President, if proper, to stand up. Your great-great-grandson, and stay, I want both of you to stay right there. Stay right there. You have an opportunity today to witness your great-great-grandmother being recognized by the State of Texas, the Senate. You've witnessed her being with the President of the United States, now here in Texas. Your great-great-grandmother is a treasure, not only a national treasure but also here for the State of Texas. And so, as we give her her flowers today, as we talk about her contributions, please make certain that you, as you go to bed tonight, as you look in the mirror tonight, I want you to recount the things that have been said about the dedication, about the hard work, the many miles that she's traveled across the State of Texas, across America, the many miles that she's traveled right here in this Capitol. I recall in 2013, when we had the license plate bill, we passed the license plate bill, the Juneteenth license plate bill. And I can recount the many festivals that we had in Fort Worth, some of which I attended, commemorating Juneteenth, that many people had never heard of before. But as a teacher, you taught many lessons concerning Juneteenth, purpose was and history was. You have been dedicated and passionate. And the reality is, as a person, you wanted us to make certain that all of us knew, Members, that this country that all of us live in is made better by persons like Opal, Opal Lee. And we should stand together and make certain that the lessons that she has taught, that's chronicled in her book, that you'll be able to look, Google up, that you remember and that we pass on. Senator Powell talked about some of the incidents in her life. We need to make certain, Mr. President, that our children understand some of the vicious things that have happened to people of color in this country. Without saying that, you know, one race is better than the other, we cannot whitewash history. We've got to make certain that our children and our children's children understand some of the issues that occurred in the past, make sure we don't repeat those same problems, those same mistakes in the future. Opal Lee represents a whole several generations here today. But I just wanted to make certain that I stood today, while your great-greats are up here, and make certain they understand who you are, how we feel about you, and how the great State of Texas feels about you. Thank you very much for being here today.

President: Thank you, Senator West. Senator Taylor, you're recognized on the resolution.

Senator Taylor: I thank you, Mr. President. Senator Powell, thank you for bringing this resolution today and allowing us to honor Miss Opal. As you know, Members, I represent Galveston County and Galveston Island where Juneteenth was born in 1865. Juneteenth is the day we meet to commemorate where General Granger delivered the message of freedom and deliverance to the last ones in bondage. That was two years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and two months after the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox. The promises of our Founding Fathers finally made their way to the, what at that time was a far and distant place, Galveston Island. It's hard to imagine a time such as that when time traveled so slowly and news as big as that took as long to get to people across this state, this country, and, in fact, the world. But there were times that monumental changes did take a long time to make their way and to reach our homes. That's not true today. Today we know instantly things that happen anywhere. But imagine that time, and imagine laboring for those two years under slavery when actually they had been, the Emancipation Proclamation had been delivered in the, and actually the battle had been won for two months. But that is the story of Juneteenth, it is a celebration of the long awaited, long prayed for freedom that is endowed to us all by our creator. As our colleague Senator Miles has said, last year we marked our first Juneteenth in Galveston Island without former Representative Al Edwards, who began the journey to make Juneteenth a state holiday in Texas 43 years ago. Through much opposition, he endured and that was made to happen. And upon passage, Al said that the State of Texas in his quote had put their stamp of acceptance of this day as an official day of acknowledgement, and that he couldn't imagine too many more things more important to the human race than coming out of slavery and into freedom. In much the same way Miss Opal, who is with us here today, endured through unspeakable evil and violence to march the message of the sanctity of Juneteenth to the steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Much as it took time for the promises of liberty and news of freedom to reach those in Galveston, it has taken time for the message of significance carried by Al Edwards and Miss Opal of this sacred day to reach the rest of our country. This year we stood in Ashton Villa on Galveston Island just blocks away from Reedy Chapel where the message of freedom was initially delivered, marking the news of the first Juneteenth as a federal holiday. Today, the whole of the United States marks Al's official day of acknowledgement and Miss Opal's celebration of freedom and recognize the significance of emancipation and promise of equality delivered to the last of those held in bondage. As Miss Opal had put it, none of us are free till all of us are free. Juneteenth is a celebration that in the United States we can all go where we wish, work where we wish, try and sometimes fail, but seeking the purposes that we wish. That's the liberty we celebrate in this country. The story of our nation is a story of setting men free, other men, not just in this country but all over the world. That is the history of this nation. Juneteenth celebrations are the time to reflect and honor those who suffered and endured slavery and reflect on America's never-ending struggle to live up to its own principles. Thank you, Miss Opal, for what your efforts have done to nationalize this day of celebration, something that was birthed here in Texas is now a national holiday. Thank you for what you've done, thank you for being here with us today so that we could honor you. And thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you, Senator. Senator Lucio on the resolution.

Senator Lucio: Thank you, Mr. President. And I can't help but thank those that have spoken before me for how elegant they expressed themselves on our special, very special guest here this morning. It's a priceless moment in the history of this Chamber to have an American icon that we can express, who we can express to her how grateful we are for your contributions to Texas and the country. In God's eyes, Miss Opal, we are one family. We are one American family. We are one Texas family. And God, I can't help but think, is very happy with you for taking care of his lambs. You are a female Peter, and you know the story. You love me, Peter. He says, I do, and He asked him three times, and then, if you do, then feed my lambs. And that's what you've done all your life. I can't help but also add that many people in our country walk beside you, many people, not only African Americans but different ethnicities, White people. I lived in the 1960s where White people were killed because they sought, they supported freedom and equality for all. And we need to acknowledge the greatness of all those that have walked beside you, but it takes a leader, one who leads through example, the way a person lives his or her life, to be able to lead in the proper direction. And that's what you have done, you've accomplished an incredible milestone. My wish would be that all educators, not only in Texas but our country, all educators, counselors, my daughter's a counselor, I wish she was here to meet you, but they can meet you, they can know about you by reading about you, by making sure that we understand how important that we're all in this together and that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. That's the answer, it's faith, and never losing faith until we report to the almighty. But you've been an incredible inspiration to many. I value this opportunity for me to express a simple thank you with a smile from all of us who really cherish you and your, your life and your contributions to our humanity. You have truly been the good neighbor, and that's what we must be in order for us to achieve our goals of human love for one another. God bless you.

President: Thank you, Senator Lucio. Senator Bettencourt to speak on the resolution.

Senator Bettencourt: Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you, Senator Powell, for bringing, as Senator West said, a national treasure to the floor of the Senate. I wanted to read from Major General Gordon Granger's order, because like Senator Taylor, my family came from Galveston and Juneteenth was well known to the Bettencourt household on Avenue S. It's still there, just right south of Gaido's. And because I think these words are important today because it relates to what happened in your life as well: *The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves.* Major General Gordon was not confused about what the mission was and what he had to say to Texans because we were the last state that had, that was allowing the institution of slavery until Juneteenth. And I only wish that that army officer had been in Marshall, Texas, in 1939, because this man fought at the Battle of Chickamauga, all sorts of battles in the Civil War and also in the prior Mexican-American War, and he would have stood up to that mob and said don't burn this house down. And I wish he was there but that's part of history, too, because that day made you. And I can tell that that day has been part of what you have been pushing all of us to do for a long time, and I'm just happy that the State of Texas took the lead long ago because they listened to Major General Gordon Granger when he said all slaves are free and that there's an

absolute equality between former slaves and their masters. And you exemplify that, and as somebody that knew about this long ago when I was a kid in Galveston, it's great to see the manifestation of that now, Senator Powell. Thank you for bringing Miss Opal to the floor of the Senate. Thank you, Mr. President.

President: Thank you, Senator. Senator Alvarado on the resolution.

Senator Alvarado: Thank you, Mr. President. I, too, rise to support Senate Resolution 19. Senator Powell, you were so eloquent in sharing Miss Opal Lee's life story, and we learned more about her than just her association with making this a national holiday, so thank you. We appreciate you even more, Miss Opal Lee. You know, there's so many words that come to mind when you hear the stories that Senator Powell has shared and certainly Senator Zaffirini talking about women influencing and shaping our history. And when I look at you and I hear your story, words like fierce, legend, passionate, and determined come to mind. We all sit here and we get to have the word honorable in front of our name, but, Miss Opal Lee, you are the most honorable. Thank you for being with us today. And, Senator Powell, we appreciate you bringing this to us. Senator Miles, I know that Representative Edwards is smiling down and his work is now complete. Thank you.

President: Thank you, Senator. Senator Hancock on the resolution.

Senator Hancock: Thank you. And thank you, Senator Powell, for bringing our hometown hero to the Capitol. Members, you have before you Miss Opal Lee, the legend. Those of us in Fort Worth know that she is about much more than what the nation knows her being about. She has, in our neighborhoods and our backyards and our hometown, always been about those in need. Those in need of an education, she taught. Those in need of encouragement, she encouraged. Those in need of nourishment, she nourished. And she didn't just start these things and get them started and leave and abandon, but she persisted as we saw. And the town and neighborhood that once rejected her now hails her as a hero. I'm honored to be living in the same place, the same county as you, Miss Lee. You are a hero. To those that needed a hero in a time where heroes of color were few, you were that hero. Your recognition took years. In Fort Worth, you have been our hero for a long time. In Texas, we beat the nation as recognizing Opal Lee as a hero. But today, while you're here with us, which is such a joy, the nation now recognizes Miss Opal Lee as a national treasure and American hero for freedom. But, Miss Lee, you're still our hometown girl and we're so thankful for you and the lives you've touched, the lives you've changed, and the example you've set. Thank you for being with us.

President: Senator Hinojosa on the resolution.

Senator Hinojosa: Thank you, Mr. President. I, too, rise to share a few comments in support of Senate Resolution 19. And thank you, Senator Powell, for bringing forth this resolution. And I know we made many comments in honoring Miss Opal Lee, thank you so much for your courage, your leadership, and determination. And I think it's important that we designate certain days like June 19th, because many times our young people of today forget the sacrifices that many of the people made throughout our history. And they forget that many of the benefits they now really have, that many of the freedoms, you needed people like Miss Opal Lee who were willing to risk their

lives, who had the courage to face violence, had the courage to face great odds but wouldn't give up in trying to make sure that their issues were addressed as to what her family experienced. You look back at the history, the different lynchings, the different hangings, and the bad parts of our nation. But it was people like Miss Opal Lee, who were willing to stand up and fight for freedom for all, equality for all, and I really want to thank you for what you've done, for the courage you show, for your persistence in making sure that we had a national holiday recognizing Juneteenth as a very special day when slaves were freed. And we wouldn't be celebrating but for people like you. So, thank you so much.

President: Senator Gutierrez on the resolution.

Senator Gutierrez: Thank you, Mr. President. Miss Lee, thank you for coming, first off, we certainly appreciate you, 98 years old. You know your work's not yet done, you know that. Right? We got a lot more work to do. You know the measure of a person's greatness isn't often about what they say, but it's what, about what they do, and your actions throughout your life have exemplified that, and I just learned a lot about you here today. We've never met before, but I've learned about who you are as a person. I've said this several times in the regular session and recently again, that if freedom is participation in power, there's all kinds of freedom out there and there's kinds of bondage as well. And we want to make sure that we get to the, to the arc of freedom, and so there's economic freedom, and so you've helped so many people not just recognize the importance of Juneteenth, but you've helped so many people, you fed people. You know that freedom means freeing yourselves from those economic ties that bind us. And so, I urge you as you move forward, I'm going to give you a little bit more homework because you've done so much, is tell all those young people your story. We need more people to get out there and vote and make sure that their voices are heard, and so we want to thank you for being a national leader, not because of what you've said, but because of what you've done in your life. Thank you, Miss Lee, for giving us the opportunity to be here with us today.

President: Senator Eckhardt on the resolution.

Senator Eckhardt: Speak on the resolution, thank you. Miss Lee, I am so honored to be in your presence today because you are showing us how to take darkness and turn it into light, and we need you to show that to us. And we so appreciate you teaching us, teaching us how to take shame and turn it into honor, teaching us how to take violent division and turn it into a national celebration of unity, and teaching us how important it is to know our history so that we can know who we are and know what we can become. So, in this moment, having heard my, some of my colleagues discuss our history, I just want to say that it is a deep, deep honor to me. My forebearer was the secretary of the Confederacy in the State of Texas and that is a point of shame in my family, and I think it's appropriate that I feel shame for that history and I think it is an opportunity here today to say that Juneteenth, it didn't take two and a half years for Texas to know that the North had won the Civil War and that slaves were free. It took two and a half years for federal enforcement of what we knew. And I am so deeply honored that you are making sure that history is

remembered accurately and that appropriate shame is felt so that we can take that shame and turn it into honor today and celebrate with you what true unity looks like. Thank you.

President: Senator Whitmire.

Senator Whitmire: Thank you, Mr. President. Senator Powell, thank you for giving us this opportunity to recognize Miss Lee. Miss Lee, I can't call you Opal, the way I was raised. But I noticed everyone's calling you Miss Opal out of fondness and respect, but I would not be allowed to if my parents were here. But I want to thank you, I've heard you recognized as an icon, a hero. I want to put you in the context of good medicine because not only did the nation need coming together, which you've shown the way and giving us the opportunity, but you've united this body. There's 31 of us, very diverse, from all parts of Texas. You've heard from most of us. I promise you, all 31 would like to speak. Eloquence speaks for itself, but I wanted to point out to you that Larry Taylor, who was so eloquent about the history of Juneteenth and what it means, is the Chair of the Republican Caucus of this esteemed body. I think that's very significant as we come together. We're not always as united as we are today. In fact, recent events have kind of tried to divide us, but you, Miss Opal, are our unifier today, as you have across this nation. And then Carol Alvarado, the Chair of the Democrat Caucus, got up. So, you are good medicine. I wish we could bottle you, your character, your spirit, your love, and there's a few people I know that are not here today I'd like to inject it in, but thank you. We need winds that you've brought to us, because we are divisive, divided as a nation, and if you watch the news, you'd think we're all falling apart. You know, the nation's just not going to survive, but you and I and my colleagues know better. So, we need to have a victory such as yours to show that, one, the system works and that we're not really as divided as some would try to press. What I really want to know in my closing remarks and I won't do it publicly, but would you privately let me know, how do you do what you do physically because I've seen you on, in the media and I've heard about your walks. You give me great hope. That means I've got a, with your age and my age, I've got about 20 more good years so I need to know about your diet, your exercise, for taking spirits, certainly I want to know about your faith. You're just a model for some, for us youngsters that have a lot of unaccomplished things we still want to accomplish. So, thank you for being here. When I hear and watch remarks about you, I can't keep from thinking of public service. I think you're a public servant. You've demonstrated. You've probably never been on a ballot once. Have you ever run for office? Well, if you get ready, let me know, I got a couple of districts I'd, you could win. In fact, I would be scared to death if you were running in my district. I'm a good Democrat, but you're a public servant and I think we are all, whether we ever, are on a ballot or not, and I think as public servants, Miss Lee, we're put here, as you know, to make the world a better place. And I want you to know, you pass with flying colors. When you are graded someday, you're going to be in the honor society when you get to heaven. And let me just say, John Lewis, world icon, gets so much recognition for his phrase, go cause some good trouble. Senator West and I were visiting while ago, he had to have heard you say that. And all due respect to John Lewis, I just know you were causing good trouble probably before Mr. Lewis demonstrated. So, thank you for being a role model, not only to just the African American community, but to all

communities and giving young people the opportunity. And I do hope, the last thing I would ask of you, make sure your family videotapes your interviews. I mean, sure, you've been on national media, but I sure hope that someone will sit down with you and document for future generations to hear your personal story, your trials and tribulations, and your great positive attitude that you demonstrate as we meet here today. So, thank you and thank this body. Mr. President, thank you for allowing us to come together today to honor a great American. Thank you, Miss Lee. Yes, Ma'am, love you.

President: Thank you, Senator. Before we go back to Senator Powell, Miss Opal, I told your family when we arranged this that I wanted to be sure you had a chair because I knew a lot of people wanted to talk and that I wanted you to just enjoy every word of it. And you know it's from the heart, for those who know you and for those who don't know you. Senator Powell, when she first asked me about this, some time ago, we said we'd save Resolution No. 19 for you. So, this is Resolution No. 19 and I'm sitting here and I'm looking at this building. I'm listening to what everyone says and we've had a lot of heroes on our floor over the 16 years I've been here and for those who've been here longer, some great Americans, great Texans. I really can't think of a greater Texas hero that we've ever had on this floor than you. I just can't think of one. And I'm going to do something extraordinary, which I've never done, didn't think about until I came out here today. But your story is so important to Texas. I think your portrait should be hanging in this Senate. I, as Lieutenant Governor, I'm going to recommend that your portrait be hung in this Senate Chamber for all eternity. We have not had a new portrait, I believe, commissioned in nearly 40 years. Some of these portraits have been here for 135 years or so. Your story, because so many students come here to the Capitol and visit, and your story needs to be told forever, and so I want it to be up there on one of those front walls up there, where the kids and the visitors see, because that's where the guides kind of tell the story and they kind of wander off after that. So, in 1939, your house was taken from you and today, and forever, your portrait will hang in the house that is of the people of Texas forever. You're welcome. You earned it. You earned it. Don't you dare. Don't you, I'll come to you. She asked me if she could speak, and I said, of course.

Opal Lee: Young people, and you are all young people if you're not 94. You know I'm flabbergasted. You know I'm humbled. I just want you to know that you, as Senators, must be a committee of one, a committee of one to change somebody's mind. If people can be taught to hate, they can be taught to love, and you are a body of people who can change the world. I just don't know what else to say except thank you. Thank you for all you've done and are doing. And just know that our getting Juneteenth to be a national holiday is a we thing, not a me thing, but a we thing. And there's so much more to do, so much more. We must, must get the stories to the children. It's got to get the educate, we've got to let people know what actually happened so it doesn't happen again, so we heal from it, so we can get on with the work of, Texas is too big and too rich to have joblessness and homelessness and climate change and healthcare that some people can get and others can't and police brutality and the pipeline from the school to the, to the prison. We've got to do something about it and do something now. Thank you, young people.

President: Miss Opal, we don't normally do this, but I want you to gavel your own resolution here. So, Senator Powell, would you make a motion?

Senator Powell: Mr. President, it is indeed my honor to ask for passage of Senate Resolution 19, honoring my dear friend, Miss Opal Lee.

President: All of those in favor stand and, if you'll gavel that for me. Hit it hard. The resolution is adopted.

SENATE RESOLUTION 3

Senator Whitmire offered the following resolution:

SR 3, In memory of former State Senator Orland Harold "Ike" Harris.

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The resolution was read.

On motion of Senator Whitmire, **SR 3** was adopted by a rising vote of the Senate.

In honor of the memory of Orland Harold "Ike" Harris, the text of the resolution is printed at the end of today's *Senate Journal*.

SENATE RESOLUTION 7

Senator West offered the following resolution:

SR 7, In memory of Opal Johnson Smith.

The resolution was read.

On motion of Senator West, **SR 7** was adopted by a rising vote of the Senate.

In honor of the memory of Opal Johnson Smith, the text of the resolution is printed at the end of today's *Senate Journal*.

REMARKS ORDERED PRINTED

On motion of Senator West and by unanimous consent, his remarks regarding **SR 7** were ordered reduced to writing and printed in the *Senate Journal* as follows:

Mr. President and Members, in addition to what the Secretary just read in the resolution, Opal was a dear friend, a spirit who had the stature and demeanor befitting a queen. The fact of the matter is in 1954, she was, in fact, Miss Prairie View, and she carried that title and, needless to say, the art, passion for Prairie View all of her life. And so, as the Secretary has mentioned, she not only talked the talk, but she walked the walk in terms of helping to raise money, much needed money for Prairie View A&M University. And so, I'm going to reiterate exactly what the Secretary said,

but I would ask Mr. President that we adopt Senate Resolution 7 and that upon adoption that it be, the remarks be spread upon the Journal so I can present the Journal to the family.

SENATE RESOLUTION 8

Senator West offered the following resolution:

SR 8, In memory of Curtistene Smith McCowan.

The resolution was read.

On motion of Senator West, **SR 8** was adopted by a rising vote of the Senate.

In honor of the memory of Curtistene Smith McCowan, the text of the resolution is printed at the end of today's *Senate Journal*.

REMARKS ORDERED PRINTED

On motion of Senator West and by unanimous consent, his remarks regarding **SR 8** were ordered reduced to writing and printed in the *Senate Journal* as follows:

Mr. President and Members, each of us have lost monumental leaders from our district, and we recognize those monumental leaders in many instances of our passage of resolutions, memorial resolutions. And you know that Curtistene, affectionately called Curtistene, was a leader by all the different organizations that she was associated with, and she was able to balance, as Senator Zaffirini would always say, as a woman she could walk backwards and do more than a man could do walking forward. This is one of those types of persons, in heels, right, in heels, I almost said it right, okay in fact, that she was one of these persons. I mean she was able to balance her profession with a family with civic engagement for everyone in the City of Desoto. And, obviously, when begin to think about the city, the school district decided to name a school after her that will last in perpetuity and, needless to say, be reflective of the high standard that she set, not only for her family, but for the city and also the State of Texas through her service for the Texas Southern Board of Regents. So, Members, I wanted to make certain that we recognize her here in the Senate by adoption of the Senate Resolution 8. Mr. President, I move adoption.

RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION

The following resolutions were adopted by the Senate:

Memorial Resolutions

SR 9 by Springer, Campbell, and Nelson, In memory of Robert Ramirez.

SR 14 by West, In memory of Joe Willard Kirven.

Congratulatory Resolutions

SR 11 by Blanco, Recognizing Paola Barron for her service as a Teen Ambassador for the Texas Advocacy Project.

SR 12 by Blanco, Recognizing Kyra Güereque for her service as a Teen Ambassador for the Texas Advocacy Project.

SR 13 by Blanco, Recognizing the establishment of the Joe K. Foster Endowed Scholarship.

RECESS AND MOTION TO ADJOURN

On motion of Senator Whitmire and by unanimous consent, the Senate at 12:29 p.m. agreed to recess until 2:00 p.m. Monday, July 26, 2021.

The Senate further agreed that when the Senate finally adjourns, it do so in memory of former State Senator Orland Harold "Ike" Harris, Opal Johnson Smith, and Curtistene Smith McCowan.

APPENDIX

RESOLUTIONS ENROLLED

July 22, 2021

SR 3, SR 6, SR 7, SR 8, SR 9, SR 11, SR 12, SR 13, SR 14, SR 19

In Memory
of
Orland Harold "Ike" Harris
Senate Resolution 3

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas joins citizens across the state in mourning the loss of Orland Harold "Ike" Harris, an esteemed statesman, who died July 7, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Born on June 5, 1932, Ike Harris became a highly respected public servant whose trailblazing leadership helped shape the course of modern politics in the Lone Star State; he will long be remembered for his many accomplishments and his legacy of dedicated service; and

WHEREAS, Ike earned a political science degree from the University of North Texas in 1954; he began his career of service as a member of the United States Air Force, and he distinguished himself as an instructor pilot and was discharged in 1957 with the rank of captain; he went on to earn a degree from Southern Methodist University's Dedman School of Law in 1960, and he was admitted to the bar that same year; he was later admitted to practice law before the United States Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, In November of 1962, Ike Harris was one of the first Republicans to be elected as a state representative from Dallas County, and five years later, he became one of only two Republicans then serving in the Texas State Senate; and

WHEREAS, During his 27-year career as a senator, Ike was known for his willingness to cross party lines to advance policies that he believed benefited all Texans; he served as chairman of numerous committees and provided skilled leadership in such areas as the implementation of interstate banking and insurance reform, and he made history as the first Republican to be dean of the Senate; he helped carve a path for conservative leadership in Texas by serving as an advisor to William P. Clements during the 1978 gubernatorial race, which resulted in the first elected Republican Texas governor in 104 years; and

WHEREAS, Ike Harris was the proud father of two daughters, Wynn and Gillian, and the proud grandfather of Colby, William, Cash, and Hayden; he found great joy in cooking for his many friends and loved ones, and he cherished time spent with family on the Texas Gulf Coast beaches, especially those in Port Aransas; and

WHEREAS, Noted for his sharp mind, his amicable spirit, and his engaging sense of humor, Ike Harris was beloved by many, and he leaves behind memories that will long be treasured by all who were privileged to share in his life; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 87th Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Orland Harold Harris; 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 Ike Harris.

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In Memory
of
Opal Johnson Smith
Senate Resolution 7

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas honors and commemorates the life of Opal Johnson Smith, who died December 27, 2020, at the age of 86; and

WHEREAS, Born August 27, 1934, Opal Johnson was an esteemed member of the Dallas community and a native of Nigton, Texas; she graduated from high school at the young age of 15 and earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Prairie View A&M University before her 20th birthday; and

WHEREAS, Opal was an active member of the Dallas Prairie View A&M University Alumni Chapter, and over the years, her fund-raising prowess contributed greatly to the growth and success of the university; she established the highly successful Annual Athletic Scholarship Gala, and her work as co-chair for the university's Capital Campaign led to more than \$34 million in funding; she was honored for her service and contributions to her alma mater and the Prairie View A&M University Foundation in 2006 with the dedication of the Opal Johnson Smith Auditorium, and in 2003, she was inducted into the National Black College Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, A highly respected educational leader, Opal earned a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and enjoyed a 35-year career in the Texas public education system; she amassed numerous awards for her outstanding service as a teacher and an administrator, and she retired as the director of alternative certification for the Dallas Independent School District; and

WHEREAS, Through all things, Opal enjoyed the love and support of her husband of 62 years, Joe Edward Smith, a fellow Prairie View alumnus who shared her enthusiastic commitment to supporting and promoting education; they were blessed with four children, who they guided by loving spiritual example, and their eight grandchildren were a source of great pride and joy for her; and

WHEREAS, Opal Smith was a woman of great wisdom, kindness, and generosity and was beloved by many, and her proud legacy of service will continue to have an impact on the lives of Texas citizens for years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 87th Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Opal Johnson Smith; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for her 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 Opal Smith.

WEST

In Memory
of
Curtistene Smith McCowan
Senate Resolution 8

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas joins the citizens of DeSoto in mourning the loss of Mayor Curtistene Smith McCowan, who died October 28, 2020, at the age of 72; and

WHEREAS, Curtistene McCowan was an exemplary citizen and a dedicated civic leader, and her courage, fair-mindedness, and commitment to public service had a far-reaching impact on the fabric of life in DeSoto; and

WHEREAS, She and her beloved husband of 54 years, Leon R. McCowan, were blessed with two sons, Danny Sebastian McCowan and Leon Curtis McCowan; her grandchildren, Tiana, Kirsten, and Taylor, were a source of much pride and joy for her; and

WHEREAS, Curtistene enjoyed a fulfilling career of more than three decades with the Federal Trade Commission; her service included 18 years as a senior investigator, and she retired from federal service on January 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, she became the first African American elected to public office in DeSoto when she won a seat on the DeSoto Independent School District Board of Trustees; she served for six years and was the board's president for two years; she also served on numerous committees and panels for the Texas Association of School Boards and the Texas Education Agency; and

WHEREAS, She was a founder of Concerned DeSoto Citizens, a nonprofit community service organization, and she held leadership positions in numerous organizations, including the Texas Southern University Board of Regents, the DeSoto Economic Development Corporation, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, Methodist Charlton Medical Center, the African American Education Archives and History Program, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, she was elected to the DeSoto City Council, and she served as mayor pro tempore from 2014 until 2016, when she was elected mayor of DeSoto; in recognition of her many years of service to the community and her untiring advocacy for education, the Curtistene S. McCowan Middle School was named in her honor; and

WHEREAS, A devout Christian who practiced her faith in her daily life, she was a longtime member of Kirkwood Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, where she served as chair of the Trustee Board; and

WHEREAS, She was a woman of grace, compassion, and perseverance, and she gave unselfishly to others; her wise counsel, her generous spirit, and her dedication to serving her community will not be forgotten by those who were privileged to know her and to share in her life; and

WHEREAS, A devoted wife, mother, and grandmother and a beloved community leader, she leaves behind memories that will be cherished forever by her family and her countless friends; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 87th Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family of Curtistene Smith McCowan; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for her 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 Curtistene McCowan.

WEST

