

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 804

By Love

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Judge Richard H. Dinkins of Nashville.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should honor the memory of those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person was retired Court of Appeals Judge Richard H. Dinkins, a champion of civil rights and an esteemed appellate judge; and

WHEREAS, Judge Richard Dinkins was born in Nashville, where his father, the late Reverend Charles L. Dinkins, Sr., served as pastor of First Baptist Church in East Nashville, as well as president of the Nashville branch of the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, after earning an undergraduate degree from Denison University in Granville, Ohio, Judge Dinkins returned to Nashville for law school, graduating from Vanderbilt University in 1977; and

WHEREAS, as a young attorney, Judge Richard Dinkins entered into private practice with the law firm headed by prominent civil rights advocate and former Tennessee state senator Avon Williams, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, during his two decades in private practice, Judge Dinkins served as a lead attorney on the Nashville school desegregation cases, as well as other high-profile civil rights and discrimination cases; he was the cooperating attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the cooperating attorney for the Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Educational Fund; and

WHEREAS, from 1999 to 2003, he practiced with the law firm of Dodson Parker Dinkins and Behm, serving as counsel to the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency and to Fisk University; and

WHEREAS, Judge Dinkins estimably served as a Part IV chancellor on the Davidson County Chancery Court from 2003 to 2008 and was appointed by Governor Phil Bredesen to the Tennessee Court of Appeals in 2008, in which capacity he served with distinction until his retirement in 2022; and

WHEREAS, on the bench, Judge Richard Dinkins meticulously authored hundreds of appellate opinions and heard thousands of cases on civil law issues; his kindness was on full display in 2019 when a video of him holding a new attorney's toddler while the attorney took her oath went "viral" and was viewed by millions across the country; and

WHEREAS, Judge Dinkins was recognized with the Nelson C. Andrews Distinguished Service Award from the Nashville Public Education Foundation for his "fierce advocacy for civil rights in public education," his "exemplary commitment to service," and as "a pillar of civic leadership in Nashville"; and

WHEREAS, he received the Freedom Fighter Medal from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education and was awarded the William M. Leech Jr. Public Service Award by the Tennessee Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, a distinguished legal professional, Judge Richard Dinkins was a member of the American, National, Nashville, and Napier-Looby bar associations, serving on the Napier-Looby board of directors for two years before serving as vice president in 1984 and president in 1985; he also served on the board of governors for the Tennessee Trial Lawyers Association and on the board of directors of the Nashville Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Judge Dinkins was a member of the Commercial Law Section of the National Bar Association; he became a barrister of the Harry Phillips Inn of Court in 1990 and a master in 2005 and was a fellow of the Tennessee Bar Association Foundation; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his children, Lachanta Lampkin, Zuri Walker, and Ian Dinkins; grandchildren, Lariah Hayes and Kennedy Potter; son-in-law, Dr. S.L. Lampkin; brother, Ken Dinkins; and a host of family and friends; and

WHEREAS, Judge Richard Dinkins exemplified the allegiance to equality and justice under the law that is characteristic of a true Tennessean, and he leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Judge Richard H. Dinkins, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, his extraordinary contributions to the people of Tennessee, and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.