

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DRHJR70346-LG-172 (2/15)

Sponsors: Representative Hall.

Referred to:

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF BENJAMIN
2 S. "BEN" RUFFIN, JR., FORMER CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
3 OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA.

4 Whereas, Benjamin S. "Ben" Ruffin, Jr. was born in Durham, North Carolina,
5 on December 11, 1941, to Benjamin S. Ruffin, Sr. and Catherine Ruffin; and

6 Whereas, Ben Ruffin graduated from Hillside High School in 1960, earned a
7 bachelor's degree in political science at North Carolina Central University in 1964 and
8 later completed the requirements for a masters degree in social work at the University of
9 North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and

10 Whereas, after graduating from college, Ben Ruffin worked for a number of
11 community-activist organizations which sought to improve the housing, employment,
12 and education of low-income residents in Durham, including the Durham Housing
13 Authority, UDI Community Development Corporation, and Operation Breakthrough;
14 and

15 Whereas, in 1977, Ben Ruffin was appointed by Governor James B. Hunt as
16 the Director of the North Carolina Human Relations Council and in 1978 was selected
17 to serve as Governor Hunt's special assistant for minority affairs, a position he held until
18 1984; and

19 Whereas, during his time in the Hunt administration, Ben Ruffin was
20 successful in expanding the number of African-American judges and State employees in
21 North Carolina; and

22 Whereas, after leaving the Hunt administration, Ben Ruffin achieved success
23 and recognition as an executive for a number of nationally recognized companies
24 becoming a role model and mentor for countless young professionals, especially young
25 African-American men; and

26 Whereas, in 1984, Ben Ruffin was appointed Vice President and Special
27 Assistant to the President of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company; and

1 Whereas, in 1986, Ben Ruffin was appointed as Director of Corporate Affairs
2 for RJR Nabisco; and

3 Whereas, in 1989, Ben Ruffin became the Vice President of Corporate
4 Affairs for RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company; and

5 Whereas, in 1999, Ben Ruffin established The Ruffin Group, a governmental
6 relations, public affairs, and community relations company, and served as the
7 company's President and Chief Executive Officer; and

8 Whereas, throughout his entire life, Ben Ruffin showed an outstanding
9 devotion to public service; and

10 Whereas, in 1991, Ben Ruffin was appointed to the Board of Governors of
11 The University of North Carolina (UNC) and in 1998 was elected as the Board's first
12 African-American Chair, a position he held until 2003; and

13 Whereas, during Ben Ruffin's tenure on the Board of Governors most of the
14 universities in the UNC system saw vast improvements on their campuses as a result of
15 the \$3.1 billion capital campaign that he vigorously championed; and

16 Whereas, Ben Ruffin was an effective leader in many civic and community
17 organizations, serving as Chair of the Corporate Roundtable of the National Black
18 Caucus of State Legislators, Chair of the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic
19 Development, and First Vice-chair of the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black
20 People, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Congressional Black Caucus
21 Foundation, Mechanics and Farmers Bank, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance
22 Company, the National Urban League, the YMCA of Greater Winston-Salem, and the
23 Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina; and

24 Whereas, Ben Ruffin was a member of several fraternal organizations,
25 including the Masons and the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity; and

26 Whereas, Ben Ruffin received numerous honors for his devotion and
27 commitment to public service, including eight honorary degrees, the NAACP's Kelly
28 Miller Humanitarian Award, the Association of North Carolina Black County Officials'
29 Frederick Douglass Leadership Award, and the National Urban League's Donald H.
30 McGannan Citation, and

31 Whereas, Ben Ruffin was honored posthumously by North Carolina Central
32 University when a new dormitory was named for him; and

33 Whereas, Ben Ruffin died on December 7, 2006, at the age of 64; and

34 Whereas, Ben Ruffin is survived by his wife, Avon Long Ruffin and two
35 daughters, April and Benita; Now, therefore,

36 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

37 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Benjamin S.
38 Ruffin, Jr. and expresses the gratitude of this State and its citizens for his life and his
39 service.

40 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly extends its deepest sympathy to the
41 family of Benjamin S. Ruffin, Jr. for the loss of a beloved family member.

42 **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
43 resolution to the family of Benjamin S. Ruffin, Jr.

44 **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.