

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1289

Sponsors: Representatives Hall, Wilkins, Bryant, Michaux (Primary Sponsors); Adams, Alexander, Bell, Blue, Braxton, Brisson, Carney, Coates, Coleman, Cunningham, Dickson, Faison, Farmer-Butterfield, Fisher, Folwell, Glazier, Goforth, Haire, T. Harrell, J. Harrell, Harrison, Holliman, Insko, Jones, Love, Lucas, Luebke, McAllister, Mobley, Ross, Samuelson, Saunders, Tolson, Tucker, Wainwright, E. Warren, Weiss, Womble, and Wray.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

April 3, 2007

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

1 becoming a role model and mentor for countless young professionals, especially young
2 African-American men; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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