

By Senator Miller

18-2177-03

1 Senate Resolution No. ____

2 A resolution recognizing and honoring Robert
3 William Saunders, Sr., for his leadership in
4 the Civil Rights Movement and his contributions
5 in designing and implementing affirmative
6 action programs.

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8 WHEREAS, Robert William Saunders, Sr., was born June 9,
9 1921, in the Roberts City area of Hillsborough County,
10 Florida, was educated in the county's public schools,
11 graduating in 1940 from George S. Middleton High School, and
12 in 1942 earned an Associate of Arts Degree at Bethune-Cookman
13 College, and

14 WHEREAS, from 1942 to 1946, Mr. Saunders served his
15 country in the United States Army Air Corps, achieving the
16 rank of "Buck Sergeant" and, before being honorably
17 discharged, was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, the Atlantic
18 Theatre of Operations Medal, and the World War II Victory
19 Medal, and

20 WHEREAS, from 1952 to 1966, Mr. Saunders served as
21 Field Secretary for the Florida State Conference of NAACP
22 Chapters, shepherding the organization and actions of
23 minorities to bring about historic changes in civil rights,
24 and from 1966 to 1976, served as Southeast Regional Director
25 for the United States Office of Equal Opportunity,
26 facilitating changes in state and local governance to achieve
27 compliance with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and

28 WHEREAS, from 1976 until his retirement in 1988, Mr.
29 Saunders headed Hillsborough County's Office of Equal
30 Opportunity, designing and implementing affirmative action

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1 programs to increase employment opportunities for minorities,
2 and, upon retiring, began compiling his memoirs, and

3 WHEREAS, on March 26, 2003, Robert William Saunders,
4 Sr., passed to eternal life with his Heavenly Father, but
5 before leaving, memorialized his civil rights experiences in
6 his book entitled "Bridging the Gap," NOW, THEREFORE,

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8 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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10 That the Florida Senate recognizes and honors the
11 extraordinary life, remarkable work, and invaluable community
12 service of Robert William Saunders, Sr., and expresses its
13 heartfelt condolences to the surviving members of his family.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution,
15 with the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Helen
16 Saunders, widow of Robert William Saunders, Sr., as a tangible
17 token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.

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