

By Senator Wilson

33-2700-03

See HR 9003B

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Senate Resolution No. ____

A resolution honoring the memory of Judge
Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr.

WHEREAS, Wilkie Demeritte Ferguson, Jr., son of
Bahamian parents, was born in Miami on May 11, 1938, received
his undergraduate degree from Florida Agricultural and
Mechanical University, and served as an officer in the United
States Army before earning a law degree from Howard University
School of Law in 1968 and launching a legal career as a staff
attorney for the Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., and

WHEREAS, in a succession of judicial appointments
beginning in 1973, Judge Ferguson rose from the Court of
Industrial Claims to become the first black jurist on the
Miami-Dade Circuit Court and, thereafter, on Florida's Third
District Court of Appeal before he was appointed in 1993 to
the United States District Court for the Southern District of
Florida, South Florida's second black to hold a federal
judgeship, and

WHEREAS, described as a pioneering jurist and crusading
rights activist whose soft-spoken, even-handed courtroom
manner cloaked a fierce sense of justice for the underdog,
Judge Ferguson is remembered for his first landmark case, in
which he found that blacks were systematically excluded from
juries of their peers, and is credited with significant
rulings that have vastly improved the quality of life for
thousands of disabled Florida residents, and

WHEREAS, Judge Ferguson, who was active in numerous
professional associations, the recipient of many prestigious
awards and honors, and, with his wife, Betty, involved in
community campaigns and charitable events, is spoken of as "a

1 gentle man . . . a very kindly man" and a judge "whose life of
2 public service exemplifies the standard for all citizens," and

3 WHEREAS, on June 9, 2003, Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson,
4 Jr., quietly and with customary dignity surrendered in his
5 battle against leukemia, having fought a good fight that has
6 left countless Floridians in his debt, 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, with immense pride mixed with
11 extreme sadness, honors the memory of an outstanding citizen
12 and extends its sincere sympathy to the family, friends, and
13 associates of Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution,
15 with the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to his wife
16 Betty Tucker Ferguson; his daughter, Tawnicia Ferguson-Rowan;
17 and his son, Wilkie D. Ferguson III, as a tangible token of
18 the sentiments of the Florida Senate.

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