



HR 9003B

2003

## House Resolution

1  
2 A resolution honoring the memory of Judge Wilkie D.  
3 Ferguson, Jr.

4  
5 WHEREAS, Wilkie Demeritte Ferguson, Jr., son of Bahamian  
6 parents, was born in Miami on May 11, 1938, received his  
7 undergraduate degree from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical  
8 University, and served as an officer in the United States Army  
9 before earning a law degree from Howard University School of Law  
10 in 1968 and launching a legal career as a staff attorney for the  
11 Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., and

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

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

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



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

33 WHEREAS, on June 9, 2003, Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr.,  
 34 quietly and with customary dignity surrendered in his battle  
 35 against leukemia, having fought a good fight that has left  
 36 countless Floridians in his debt, NOW, THEREFORE,

37  
 38 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of  
 39 Florida:

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 41 That the House of Representatives, with immense pride mixed  
 42 with extreme sadness, honors the memory of an outstanding  
 43 citizen and extends its sincere sympathy to the family, friends,  
 44 and associates of Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr.

45 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be  
 46 presented to wife Betty Tucker Ferguson, daughter Tawnicia  
 47 Ferguson-Rowan, and son Wilkie D. Ferguson III as a tangible  
 48 token of the sentiments expressed herein.