

1 House Resolution

2 A resolution recognizing the life and legacy of E.
3 Lilyan Spencer on the 120th anniversary of her birth.

4
5 WHEREAS, E. Lilyan Spencer was born in 1906, in
6 Tallahassee, Florida, to the Rev. Abraham B. Spencer (1863-
7 1924), of Decatur, Georgia and Lucinda C. Stroman Spencer (1871-
8 1933), of Tallahassee, and

9 WHEREAS, E. Lilyan Spencer was a lifelong Tallahassee
10 native, graduating from the original Lincoln High School and
11 earning a bachelor's degree in mathematics with a special
12 certification in administration and supervision from Florida
13 Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), and

14 WHEREAS, throughout her life, E. Lilyan Spencer was a
15 distinguished leader in athletics, education, business, and
16 community service, and

17 WHEREAS, playing professional tennis throughout the 1930s,
18 E. Lilyan Spencer was a nationally celebrated athlete, playing
19 on the segregated national tennis circuit and winning 10 state
20 championships, and

21 WHEREAS, in 1931, E. Lilyan Spencer was the Florida Tennis
22 Association Women's Singles Champion, and she held this title
23 for 10 years without suffering a defeat in competition, and

24 WHEREAS, E. Lilyan Spencer secured her place in
25 professional tennis history by winning a national tennis title

26 | at the 1937 Southern Open Championship, also known as the 21st
27 | American Tennis Association Nationals, becoming the first
28 | African American woman from Tallahassee to win a national sports
29 | title, and

30 | WHEREAS, the athletic excellence, discipline, and
31 | perseverance of E. Lilyan Spencer broke barriers for women and
32 | African Americans in competitive sports and earned her
33 | posthumous recognition by the International Tennis Hall of Fame,
34 | and

35 | WHEREAS, after her career in tennis ended, E. Lilyan
36 | Spencer moved into education, first as a math teacher,
37 | basketball coach, and athletic director, and eventually as the
38 | first female principal at then Bond Junior High School, and

39 | WHEREAS, E. Lilyan Spencer was also a committed community
40 | service leader, playing an integral role in the establishment of
41 | the Bond Community Credit Union, an organization for which she
42 | served as Treasurer, as well as chair of the Negro Division of
43 | the March of Dimes campaign to raise money for children with
44 | polio, and

45 | WHEREAS, in 1947, E. Lilyan Spencer was issued a permit to
46 | open a restaurant and, although the name of the restaurant is
47 | not known, she applied for a county permit to sell beer from the
48 | location, and

49 | WHEREAS, E. Lilyan Spencer was a real estate investor and
50 | property owner who sold lots to former Bond principal Walton S.

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51 Seabrooks, the Lewis family, and to Mozerna Riley, widow of
 52 educator John G. Riley, and sold homes and granted mortgages to
 53 blacks as well as whites, and

54 WHEREAS, in late 1956, E. Lilyan Spencer was admitted to
 55 FAMU hospital for an undisclosed illness and died in Tallahassee
 56 on January 24, 1957, at the age of 51, and

57 WHEREAS, E. Lilyan Spencer's life exemplified leadership,
 58 public service, resilience, and excellence, and her legacy
 59 remains a source of pride for the City of Tallahassee, Leon
 60 County, and the State of Florida, NOW, THEREFORE,

61
 62 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
 63 Florida:

64
 65 That the 120th anniversary of the birth of E. Lilyan
 66 Spencer is recognized, and that she is honored for her
 67 extraordinary contributions to education, athletics, and
 68 community service.