

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 47

Introduced by Assembly Member Davis

April 7, 2011

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 47—Relative to the 50th anniversary of service by African American justices in the California Courts.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 47, as introduced, Davis. Courts: 50th anniversary of service by African American justices.

This measure would acknowledge the 50th anniversary of service by African American justices in the California Courts, and would encourage all Californians to share in statewide and local celebrations throughout the year to recognize the contributions and diversity of these and other judicial trailblazers. The bill would also call upon the leadership of the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government, and the greater legal, educational, and justice communities, to sponsor and participate in educational and outreach activities that highlight the work of the justices of the California Courts of Appeal and the California Supreme Court.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, In 1961, Associate Justice Edwin L. Jefferson, a
2 native of Mississippi and a University of Southern California,
3 Gould School of Law graduate, became the first African American
4 to serve on a California Court of Appeal, where he served with
5 distinction in the Second Appellate District, Division Four, from
6 1961 to 1975; and

1 WHEREAS, Edwin L. Jefferson was appointed to the Los
2 Angeles Municipal Court in 1941 by Governor Culbert Olson,
3 further marking the year 2011 as the 70th anniversary of the
4 appointment of California's first African American judge, and he
5 served honorably in that court until he was elevated to the Superior
6 Court of Los Angeles in 1949 by Governor Earl Warren; and

7 WHEREAS, At his retirement in 1975, Justice Jefferson was
8 still the only African American appellate justice serving on the
9 California Courts of Appeal when Governor Edmund G. Brown,
10 Jr., appointed Justice Jefferson's brother, Bernard S. Jefferson, to
11 succeed him; and

12 WHEREAS, Justice Jefferson opened the door for the historic
13 appointments of other judicial pioneers to the California Supreme
14 Court and Courts of Appeal, including Wiley W. Manuel, a
15 graduate of the University of California, Hastings College of the
16 Law, who became the first African American associate justice of
17 the California Supreme Court, serving with the utmost distinction
18 from 1977 to 1981; and

19 WHEREAS, Associate Justice Clinton White, a graduate of the
20 University of California Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall),
21 became the first African American to serve as a presiding justice
22 of a California Court of Appeal, heading the First Appellate
23 District, Division Three, from 1978 to 1995; and

24 WHEREAS, Presiding Justice Arleigh Maddox Woods, a
25 graduate of Southwestern University School of Law, became the
26 first African American female justice to serve on a California Court
27 of Appeal, where she served in the Second Appellate District,
28 Division Four, from 1980 to 1995; and

29 WHEREAS, On the occasion of the 50th anniversary year, the
30 state of California congratulates the 14 justices who have served
31 on appellate courts throughout the state—six of whom are currently
32 serving—and the three African American justices who have served
33 on the California Supreme Court, all having heard and decided
34 landmark legal cases and having set legal precedents that remain
35 in force today; and

36 WHEREAS, The historic tenures of these justices include that
37 of Associate Justice John J. Miller, who has the distinct tribute of
38 having served as a member of the California State Legislature prior
39 to his appointment to the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District
40 in 1978 by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., the same who

1 currently serves as Governor of the State of California—and where
2 Justice Miller served until 1985; and

3 WHEREAS, Justice Miller, a graduate of Howard University
4 School of Law, served honorably in the California State Assembly
5 from 1967 to 1978, representing the 17th Assembly District, later
6 renumbered as the 13th Assembly District, holding the leadership
7 post of Assembly Minority Leader from 1970 to 1971, and holding
8 numerous standing subcommittee and select committee leadership
9 posts, including judiciary, criminal justice, criminal procedure,
10 ways and means, governmental administration, local government,
11 and resources and land use, to name a few; and

12 WHEREAS, In addition, while serving the Assembly, Assembly
13 Member Miller’s outstanding contributions to the administration
14 of justice in California included his service as a member of the
15 Judicial Council of California from 1975 to 1978, where he
16 supported the causes of improving the administration of the courts
17 and increasing access to justice for all Californians; and

18 WHEREAS, These men and women of distinction are among
19 the thousands of justices, judges, and subordinate judicial officers
20 who serve admirably each day in courts throughout the state of
21 California, whose service inspires the trust and confidence of
22 Californians from all walks of life, and who share a common goal
23 of ensuring that all persons have equal access to the courts and
24 court proceedings and programs; and

25 WHEREAS, As a strategic goal of California’s judicial branch,
26 the judicial branch community strives to understand and be
27 responsive to the needs of court users from diverse cultural
28 backgrounds and will work toward ensuring that the makeup of
29 California’s judicial branch will reflect the diversity of the state’s
30 residents; now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
32 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature joins all Californians in
33 acknowledging the occasion of this 50th anniversary historical
34 milestone and encourages all Californians to share in statewide
35 and local celebrations throughout the year to recognize the
36 contributions and diversity of these and other judicial trailblazers;
37 and be it further

38 *Resolved*, That the Legislature calls upon the leadership of the
39 judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government, and
40 the greater legal, educational, and justice communities, including

1 the courts, bar associations, universities, law schools, legal
2 education pipeline programs, and legal aid providers, to sponsor
3 and participate in educational and outreach activities that highlight
4 the work of the justices of the California Courts of Appeal and the
5 California Supreme Court; and be it further
6 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
7 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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