



Resolution EC-0702

A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF BENJAMIN S. “BEN” RUFFIN, JR., FORMER CHAIR OF THE CORPORATE ROUNDTABLE OF THE NATIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

WHEREAS, Benjamin S. “Ben” Ruffin, Jr. was born in Durham, North Carolina, on December 11, 1941, to Benjamin S. Ruffin, Sr. and Catherine Ruffin; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin was a 1960 graduate of Hillside High School, a 1964 graduate of North Carolina Central University and later received a masters degree in social work from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin held a number of positions in his professional career including his work as a community activist and advocate for the poor, a trusted and valued assistant and advisor to Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. and as an executive at North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Ben Ruffin joined the R. J. Reynolds Family and served as the Director of Corporate Affairs for RJR Nabisco and later as the Vice President of Corporate Affairs for RJR Tobacco; and

WHEREAS, in his corporate capacity with R. J. Reynolds, Ben Ruffin became involved in the activities of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL); and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin became a member of NBCSL’s Corporate Roundtable and was the longest-serving Chair of the Corporate Roundtable; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin was an advocate of affirmative action and encouraged corporations to hire African-Americans and to get them involved on the Corporate Roundtable; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin celebrated the success and supported the struggles of African-Americans in corporate America; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin understood the plight of the working people and sought for fairness and justice for the common man and as Chair of the Corporate Roundtable worked together with the leadership and members of the Labor Roundtable; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin retired from R. J. Reynolds and established The Ruffin Group in 1999, a government relations and public affairs firm; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin’s continued dedication to NBCSL and his leadership as Chair of the Corporate Roundtable helped to ensure that NBCSL remained a financially viable and stable organization; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin understood the value of a good education and had a sincere desire to reach back and mentor young people and to present positive role models to our youth; and



NATIONAL BLACK CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

Ratified by Executive Committee ■ August 7, 2007

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin initiated the first school visit during NBCSL's Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia when Corporate Roundtable members visited and interacted with students at Benjamin E. Mayes High School on November 29, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin was an effective leader in many civic and community organizations on the local, state and national levels, serving as Chair of the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina; Chair of the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Mechanics and Farmers Bank, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, the National Urban League, the YMCA of Greater Winston Salem, and the Research Triangle Foundation of North Carolina; and was a member of the Masons and the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin received numerous honors for his devotion and commitment to public service, including eight honorary degrees, the NAACP's Kelly M. Alexander Humanitarian Award, the Association of North Carolina Black County Officials' Frederick Douglass Leadership Award, and the National Urban League's Donald H. McGannan Citation; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin was an active member of Emmanuel Baptist Church and served as a Sunday School teacher and usher; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin died unexpectedly on December 7, 2006, at the age of 64; and

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin is survived by his wife, Avon Long Ruffin and two daughters, April and Benita;

WHEREAS, Ben Ruffin has received numerous posthumous honors including the naming of dormitory named in his honor at North Carolina Central University; induction into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame and recipient of the City of Winston-Salem, NC's Martin Luther King, Jr. "Dare to Make a Difference Award"; and

WHEREAS, on August 8, 2007, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators voted to honor Ben Ruffin by renaming the Corporate Roundtable Luncheon as the "Ben S. Ruffin Corporate Roundtable Luncheon;" now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators extends its deepest sympathy to the family of Benjamin S. Ruffin, Jr. for the loss of a beloved family member, an humanitarian, a freedom-fighter, a champion of equal justice and economic opportunity, and a friend to all.

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators honors the memory of Benjamin S. Ruffin, Jr. and expresses the gratitude of this organization and its members for his life and his service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution is effective on this 13th day of December 2007.

Sponsored by: Representative Calvin Smyre (GA)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Executive Committee

Certified by: Representative Calvin Smyre, (GA), NBCSL President

Ratified by: Executive Committee, August 7, 2007

Ratification is Certified by: Representative Calvin Smyre (GA), NBCSL President