

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

SENATE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE
WILLIAM C. CLIFTON, ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE RHODE ISLAND DISTRICT
COURT

Introduced By: Senators Metts, McCaffrey, Ruggerio, Goodwin, and Lynch Prata

Date Introduced: March 27, 2018

Referred To: Recommended for Immediate Consideration

1 WHEREAS, It is with heartfelt sadness that this Senate has learned of the passing of the
2 esteemed Judge William C. Clifton of the Rhode Island District Court; and

3 WHEREAS, William C. Clifton grew up in San Antonio, Texas, where he daily faced the
4 twin evils of poverty and racial segregation. As he once stated, "I got an opportunity to feel
5 firsthand what it was like to be a second-class citizen." Yet, thanks to his devoted parents, who
6 scrimped and saved to get him out of segregated schools and into Catholic schools, and his own
7 tireless work ethic, Judge Clifton persevered and accomplished much despite facing the hurdles
8 of inequality and injustice his entire life; and

9 WHEREAS, Judge Clifton attained a law degree from the University of California at Los
10 Angeles, and embarked on what would become a distinguished and exemplary law and public
11 service career. He served with distinction as a Special Assistant Attorney General, as a Superior
12 Court Arbitrator, as a principal in the Clifton & Associates law firm, and as one of Cranston's
13 Assistant Attorney Solicitors; and

14 WHEREAS, Judge Clifton's 2004 appointment to the bench in Rhode Island made him
15 the only minority Judge on the District Court and one of only four minority judges in the entire
16 state court system at that time. Two of the additional three judges included his wife, Federal
17 Appeals Court Judge O. Rogeriee Thompson, who was then a Rhode Island Superior Court
18 Judge, and his brother, retired Superior Court Judge Edward C. Clifton; and

19 WHEREAS, Judge Clifton was a trailblazer who broke through many barriers during his

1 distinguished career and will be sorely missed by his family, his many friends and his colleagues.
2 District Court Chief Judge Jeanne E. LaFazia summed up the thoughts and feelings of all who
3 knew Judge Clifton when she said that, "He was kind, caring and thoughtful in all he did. He
4 leaves a void in the court and in our hearts"; now, therefore be it

5 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
6 hereby expresses its deepest condolences on the passing of the Honorable William C. Clinton,
7 Associate Justice of the Rhode Island District Court; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
9 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Honorable O. Rogeriee Thompson, Justice
10 of the United States Court of Appeals, First Circuit.

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