

1 State of Arkansas  
2 87th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2009

HR 1030

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5 By: Representative Woods  
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## 8 HOUSE RESOLUTION

9 TO HONOR NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HALL OF FAME  
10 BASKETBALL COACH NOLAN RICHARDSON AND HIS  
11 ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF  
12 ARKANSAS.

### 13 Subtitle

14 TO HONOR NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HALL OF  
15 FAME BASKETBALL COACH NOLAN RICHARDSON  
16 AND HIS ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS  
17 TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.  
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21 WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson, born December 27, 1941, rose from a  
22 difficult childhood in the segregated border town of El Paso, Texas, to the  
23 pinnacle of college basketball, coaching the 1994 Arkansas Razorbacks to the  
24 NCAA men's national basketball championship, the first in school history; and  
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26 WHEREAS, after his mother died when he was three (3) years of age and  
27 his father died when he was twelve (12) years of age, Nolan Richardson and  
28 his sisters were raised by their grandmother, affectionately nicknamed "Old  
29 Momma", who preached common sense, education, and discipline to the children  
30 as they grew up in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood; and  
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32 WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson, an excellent athlete who played football,  
33 basketball, and baseball, was the first black student to attend El Paso's  
34 Bowie High School when it integrated in 1955, but was unable to stay in the  
35 same hotels as the white players when the teams traveled and often faced  
36 racist remarks from fans and fellow students; and



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WHEREAS, after high school Nolan Richardson attended junior college in Arizona on an athletic scholarship and was named a Junior College All-American as a first baseman, but turned down a contract offer from Major League Baseball’s Houston Astros and instead enrolled at Texas Western University – now the University of Texas - El Paso – to complete his bachelor’s degree; and

WHEREAS, Texas Western University did not have a baseball team at the time, so Richardson played basketball, learning the intricacies of sound defense from coach Don Haskins, a member of the National Basketball Association Hall of Fame, and he completed his training to become a school teacher; and

WHEREAS, after a couple of hamstring injuries prevented him from making the San Diego Chargers football team, who paid him \$500 to attend a tryout camp, and the fledgling American Basketball Association with the Dallas Chaparrals, Nolan Richardson became all the more determined to succeed as a coach; and

WHEREAS, Richardson returned to his alma mater, Bowie High School, as a physical education teacher where during his first three (3) years he coached seventh, eighth, and ninth graders, but quickly began earning a reputation as a basketball coach and was named the Texas High School Basketball Coach of the Year three (3) times in the decade he spent at Bowie High School compiling a record of 190-80; and

WHEREAS, from Bowie High, Richardson moved to West Texas Junior College in 1979, quickly became a hero by reaching the junior college championship tournament in his first year and winning it the next, and finished a three-year career with a 98-14 record; and

WHEREAS, Richardson was the head basketball coach for the Tulsa University Golden Hurricane from 1981 through 1985, wining the National Invitational Tournament his first season, and making either the NIT or the NCAA tournament every season while compiling a record of 129-37; and

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WHEREAS, Richardson built a national reputation for himself at Tulsa on the strength of his record and by wearing loud, polka-dotted shirts to his games, commenting on his unusual attire to Sports Illustrated magazine that he always believed that a person in his position should be more than just a basketball coach; that with his visibility he could help bring the community together; and that especially as a black man, he could show people how to respect one another better; and

WHEREAS, in 1985 Nolan Richardson faced one of the happiest moments of his life when the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville offered him the head coaching position for the Razorbacks basketball team, becoming the first black head basketball coach at the university and the entire Southwestern Conference, but also one of the saddest upon learning that his daughter Yvonne had been diagnosed with leukemia and although as sick as she was and being treated by specialists in Tulsa, she convinced Richardson to accept the job in Arkansas and he reluctantly bid his family farewell and moved to Fayetteville; and

WHEREAS, Richardson's first two (2) years with the Razorbacks were extremely challenging both professionally, taking over from popular coach Eddie Sutton and revamping the Hogs' style of play, but compiling only 12-16 and 19-14 records, and personally, losing daughter Yvonne after a long and painful battle with cancer; and

WHEREAS, even during the most acute phase of her illness, Yvonne had encouraged her father to produce a winning basketball team, and after her death, Richardson devoted himself fully to this objective of delivering a consistent winner to the Razorback basketball program after receiving a vote of confidence from the university with a new five-year contract; and

WHEREAS, bolstered by the administration's display of confidence, Richardson began delivering "Forty (40) Minutes of Hell" to Razorback opponents and the some of the most exciting and winningest basketball teams in the school's history; and

1 WHEREAS, the Razorbacks made the Final Four of the NCAA basketball  
2 tournament in 1990, 1994, a year they spent ranked among the top three (3)  
3 teams in the nation, and 1995, showcasing Nolan Richardson's pressing,  
4 pressure defense and fast-moving, "run-and-gun" brand of basketball that  
5 usually spelled victory for the Hogs and gave the Razorbacks the opportunity  
6 to come from behind to erase any deficit; and

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8 WHEREAS, one of Richardson's best coaching efforts came with little  
9 recognition when the 1993 Razorbacks, despite losing three (3) key players to  
10 the National Basketball Association and another missing half the season with  
11 an injury, advanced to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament; and

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13 WHEREAS, with the 1994 NCAA Championship, cheered on by sitting  
14 President Bill Clinton and his family, Nolan Richardson earned the  
15 recognition he deserved, being named the 1994 Naismith Men's College Coach of  
16 the Year while his Razorbacks spent nine (9) weeks as the consensus number  
17 one team in the nation before beating Duke University in the NCAA  
18 championship finals; and

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20 WHEREAS, Richardson gave the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville  
21 its most recent Final Four appearance in 1995, capping another stellar season  
22 with a loss to the UCLA Bruins in the NCAA championship game; and

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24 WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson is the winningest coach in Razorback  
25 basketball history, compiling a 389-169 record in 17 seasons and the only  
26 men's college basketball head coach to win a Junior College National  
27 Championship, the National Invitation Tournament, and the NCAA Division I  
28 Men's Basketball Tournament; and

29  
30 WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson has been elected into the National Collegiate  
31 Basketball Hall of Fame, Class of 2008,

32  
33 NOW THEREFORE,

34 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH GENERAL  
35 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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1           That the House of Representatives honors the outstanding record and  
2 achievements of basketball coach Nolan Richardson and thanks him for his  
3 contributions to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville Razorback  
4 basketball program and the State of Arkansas.

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6           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon adoption of this resolution, an  
7 appropriate copy shall be provided to Coach Nolan Richardson by the Chief  
8 Clerk of the House of Representatives.

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