

1 State of Arkansas  
2 88th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2011

HR 1033

4  
5 By: Representative Woods  
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## 7 HOUSE RESOLUTION

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

### 12 Subtitle

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14 TO HONOR NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HALL OF FAME  
15 BASKETBALL COACH NOLAN RICHARDSON AND HIS  
16 ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE  
17 STATE OF ARKANSAS.  
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20 WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson, born December 27, 1941, rose from a  
21 difficult childhood in the segregated border town of El Paso, Texas, to the  
22 pinnacle of college basketball, coaching the 1994 Arkansas Razorbacks to the  
23 NCAA men's national basketball championship, the first in school history; and  
24

25 WHEREAS, after his mother died when he was three (3) years of age and  
26 his father died when he was twelve (12) years of age, Nolan Richardson and  
27 his sisters were raised by their grandmother, affectionately nicknamed "Old  
28 Momma", who preached common sense, education, and discipline to the children  
29 as they grew up in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood; and  
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31 WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson, an excellent athlete who played football,  
32 basketball, and baseball, was the first black student to attend El Paso's  
33 Bowie High School when it integrated in 1955, but was unable to stay in the  
34 same hotels as the white players when the teams traveled and often faced  
35 racist remarks from fans and fellow students; and  
36



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

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

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

19  
20       WHEREAS, Richardson returned to his alma mater, Bowie High School, as  
21 a physical education teacher where during his first three (3) years he  
22 coached seventh, eighth, and ninth graders, but quickly began earning a  
23 reputation as a basketball coach and was named the Texas High School  
24 Basketball Coach of the Year three (3) times in the decade he spent at Bowie  
25 High School compiling a record of 190-80; and

26  
27       WHEREAS, from Bowie High, Richardson moved to West Texas Junior  
28 College in 1979, quickly became a hero by reaching the junior college  
29 championship tournament in his first year and winning it the next, and  
30 finished a three-year career with a 98-14 record; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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36       WHEREAS, the Razorbacks made the Final Four of the NCAA basketball

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

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

12 WHEREAS, with the 1994 NCAA Championship, cheered on by sitting  
13 President Bill Clinton and his family, Nolan Richardson earned the  
14 recognition he deserved, being named the 1994 Naismith Men's College Coach of  
15 the Year while his Razorbacks spent nine (9) weeks as the consensus number  
16 one team in the nation before beating Duke University in the NCAA  
17 championship finals; and  
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19 WHEREAS, Richardson gave the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville  
20 its most recent Final Four appearance in 1995, capping another stellar season  
21 with a loss to the UCLA Bruins in the NCAA championship game; and  
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23 WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson is the winningest coach in Razorback  
24 basketball history, compiling a 389-169 record in 17 seasons and the only  
25 men's college basketball head coach to win a Junior College National  
26 Championship, the National Invitation Tournament, and the NCAA Division I  
27 Men's Basketball Tournament; and  
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29 WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson has been elected into the National Collegiate  
30 Basketball Hall of Fame, Class of 2008,  
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32 NOW THEREFORE,

33 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH GENERAL  
34 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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36 That the House of Representatives honors the outstanding record and

1 achievements of basketball coach Nolan Richardson and thanks him for his  
2 contributions to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville Razorback  
3 basketball program and the State of Arkansas.

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