

State of Arkansas

As Engrossed: H3/14/11

88th General Assembly

Regular Session, 2011

HR 1033

By: Representatives Woods, Walker, Leding

HOUSE RESOLUTION

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

Subtitle

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

WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson, born December 27, 1941, rose from a
difficult childhood in the segregated border town of El Paso, Texas, to the
pinnacle of college basketball, coaching the 1994 Arkansas Razorbacks to the
NCAA men's national basketball championship, the first in school history; and

WHEREAS, after his mother died when he was three (3) years of age and
his father died when he was twelve (12) years of age, Nolan Richardson and
his sisters were raised by their grandmother, affectionately nicknamed "Old
Momma", who preached common sense, education, and discipline to the children
as they grew up in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, Nolan Richardson, an excellent athlete who played football,
basketball, and baseball, was the first black student to attend El Paso's
Bowie High School when it integrated in 1955, but was unable to stay in the
same hotels as the white players when the teams traveled and often faced
racist remarks from fans and fellow students; and



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

7
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

13
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

31
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

8
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

18
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

24
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

30
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
22

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
28

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

32 NOW THEREFORE,

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

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.
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9 */s/Woods*
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