

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 92-4748, by Representatives Franklin, Wineberry, Ebersole, Braddock, Anderson, R. Fisher, Heavey, Sheldon, Fraser, Broback, Paris, Leonard, Ogden, Rasmussen, Nelson, Pruitt, Zellinsky, Ludwig, Bray, Moyer, Silver, Carlson, J. Kohl, G. Cole, O'Brien, Wynne, Spanel and Basich

WHEREAS, The House of Representatives recognizes February as the celebration of Black History Month; and

WHEREAS, Alex Haley, the author of the noted book "Roots: The Saga of an American Family" died during a recent visit to Seattle; and

WHEREAS, The book "Roots" chronicled Haley's painstaking research into his African ancestry and inspired people of all races to explore their heritage; and

WHEREAS, We are saddened by the author and historian's death but grateful for the memory of a man who awakened this nation to the story of a portion of its population too long trampled underfoot; and

WHEREAS, Haley's book "Roots" told the gripping story of an African taken into slavery and of generations of his descendants, slave and free, in this country; and

WHEREAS, "Roots" won the Pulitzer Prize in 1977, sold 6 million hardcover copies, and became one of the most important works of late 20th century American literature by one of the most influential writers since World War II; and

WHEREAS, The twelve-hour television miniseries based on the book attracted the largest television audience of any show up to its broadcast in 1977; and

WHEREAS, Haley is credited with sensitizing many Americans, white and black, to the horrors endured by African Americans under slavery; and

WHEREAS, Television viewers were inspired by the struggle of Kunta Kinte and his progeny to maintain their humanity in the face of oppression through six generations; and

WHEREAS, The book and miniseries gave special meaning to millions of Americans of African ancestry, and also encouraged millions of other Americans to look differently at black history and better understand the crisscrossed paths of African and European experience in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Haley showed African Americans that they survived slavery because of the will of their ancestors to tell later generations that they were not born inferior and that slavery could not stop their struggle for freedom; and

WHEREAS, Haley's rich descriptions of his ancestors' lives set off a wave of interest in genealogy among all races that lasted long after the book faded from best-seller lists; and

WHEREAS, Haley's first book, "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" showed many African Americans that people born poor, on welfare, guilty of criminal acts, and sent to jail can still turn their lives around and make a positive difference in the world;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize that Alex Haley's books went a long way to instilling pride in African Americans and helped raise their consciousness about their strong African heritage; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives acknowledge Alex Haley's significant contribution in enabling all Americans to come to grips with their past and because of this, future generations will be forever in his debt; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives believe Haley's greatest and longest lasting gift to the American people is teaching us all the importance of respecting racial diversity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to William Alexander Haley, son of Alex Haley.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of
Resolution 4748 adopted by the House of Representatives
March 3, 1992.

Alan Thompson, Chief Clerk