

Enrolled
Senate Concurrent Resolution 29

Sponsored by Senators MANNING JR, PROZANSKI, Representative HOLVEY; Senator BEYER,
Representatives FAHEY, LIVELY, NATHANSON

Whereas Dr. Edwin “Ed” Coleman was born in El Dorado, Arkansas, in 1932 and later moved with his family to Alameda, California; and

Whereas Ed Coleman lived a rich and varied life as a university professor, musician, civil rights activist, husband, father, veteran, author, Ducks fan, storyteller and active member of his community; and

Whereas Ed Coleman served in the United States Air Force Reserve during the Korean War; and

Whereas Ed Coleman graduated from San Francisco State College with a degree in theater and taught the subject there and at Chico State College; and

Whereas Ed Coleman’s lifelong passion for music was set when, at the age of six, he fell in love with the violin and began lessons; and

Whereas at college and in the military, Ed Coleman learned to play the acoustic bass, and he enjoyed a career as a professional musician while also teaching theater; and

Whereas Ed Coleman’s talent as a jazz musician granted him the opportunity to play onstage with such famous performers as Vince Guaraldi, Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Tormé, the Kingston Trio, Cal Tjader and Peter, Paul and Mary; and

Whereas Ed Coleman moved with his wife, Charmaine, to Eugene in 1966 and earned his doctorate in theater at the University of Oregon, writing his dissertation on the plays of Langston Hughes; and

Whereas Ed Coleman was first hired at the University of Oregon’s English department as an assistant professor in 1971 and went on to be an inspiring leader in the English department and the folklore and ethnic studies programs for more than three decades; and

Whereas Ed Coleman provided wisdom and support to thousands of students and gave generously of his time as a dissertation advisor for students in English, music, education, special education and psychology; and

Whereas one former student recalled that, in addition to the regular curriculum, Ed Coleman imparted his personal philosophy, instructing his students “to always think twice, and always have more compassion toward others, and always do what’s right, no matter how hard it is”; and

Whereas Ed Coleman started the University of Oregon’s first African-American literature program and was responsible for guiding the university toward a more racially diverse literature curriculum; and

Whereas Ed Coleman was a staunch defender of civil rights and served on many University of Oregon committees to forward that cause, including the President’s Committee on Race, the Affirmative Action Search Committee and the Committee on Curriculum Integration, and he also served as an advisor at the Black Student Union and Cultural Center; and

Whereas whether at the university or in the larger community, Ed Coleman fought racial injustice with reasoned wisdom and thoughtful discourse; and

Whereas Ed Coleman’s involvement in the civil rights movement afforded him the opportunity to meet Martin Luther King, Jr., and discuss civil rights with author James Baldwin; and

Whereas well-known for his empathy and compassion, Ed Coleman believed that “in all of history, in all of literature, what we are seeking is an understanding of the human spirit, the human condition”; and

Whereas Ed Coleman’s interests were wide and he generously gave of himself to his community, near and far; and

Whereas Ed Coleman served as a track and field official for the University of Oregon; and

Whereas Ed Coleman was president of the Oregon Folklore Society and a contributing editor for the Circle Poetry Forum and the Northwest Journal of African and Afro-American Studies; and

Whereas Ed Coleman served on the Lane Arts Council, the Oregon Arts Foundation and the Western States Art Foundation; and

Whereas Ed Coleman acted as a consultant for the National Endowment for the Arts and, at the local level, for the Committee on Hate Crimes and the Committee on Prevention of Gang Activity; and

Whereas Ed Coleman’s awards include the Frederick Douglass Scholarship Award, the Charles E. Johnson Memorial Award and, from the university’s Office of Multicultural Affairs, which also named its annual lecture series after him, the Outstanding Faculty Award and the Most Honored Professor Award; and

Whereas in 1991, the City of Eugene awarded Ed Coleman the Martin Luther King, Jr., Lifetime Achievement Award; and

Whereas after his retirement in 1998, Ed Coleman continued to teach but left enough time to pursue music, photography, writing and advocacy in social causes; and

Whereas Ed Coleman’s warm personality, kindness, outspoken wisdom and love for all people made him a beloved figure at the university and in the community at large; and

Whereas Ed Coleman’s son Callan said that his father “would want people to know that he was kicking till the very end — kicking, jamming, laughing and loving”; and

Whereas Ed Coleman died on January 20, 2017, at the age of 84 and is survived by his wife, Charmaine, his two sons, Edwin and Callan, and two grandchildren; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly, honor, celebrate and express our appreciation for Dr. Edwin “Ed” Coleman and his numerous accomplishments in academics and music and his legacy of work for justice and equality.

Adopted by Senate May 24, 2017

Lori L. Brocker, Secretary of Senate

Peter Courtney, President of Senate

Adopted by House June 20, 2017

Tina Kotek, Speaker of House