

**I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
RESOLUTIONS**

Resolution No.	Sponsor	Title	Date Intro	Date of Presentation	Date Adopted	Date Referred	Referred to	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE AUTHOR REPORT FILED	NOTES
221-36 (LS)	Therese M. Terlaje Tina Rose Muña Barnes Amanda L. Shelton Telena Cruz Nelson Sabina Flores Perez Christopher M. Dueñas Frank Blas Jr. V. Anthony Ada Joanne Brown James C. Moylan Clynton E. Ridgell Joe S. San Agustin Telo T. Taitague Jose "Pedro" Terlaje Mary Camacho Torres	Relative to posthumously recognizing former Senior Jurist Pro Tempore for the Superior and Supreme Courts of Guam, Honorable Richard Hugh Benson for over 44 years of service in Pacific court systems and expressing condolences to his family on his passing on behalf of the people of Guam.	12/9/21 11:58 a.m.	12/15/21						

I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2021 (FIRST) Regular Session

Resolution No. 221-36 (LS)

Introduced by:

Therese M. Terlaje *Terl*
 Tina Rose Muña Barnes *W. Rose*
 Amanda L. Shelton *Shelton*
 Telena Cruz Nelson *Telena*
 Sabina Flores Perez *SFP*
 Christopher M. Duenas *CD*
 Frank F. Blas Jr. *Blas*
 V. Anthony Adams *Adams*
 Joanne Brown *Joanne*
 James C. Moylan *JCM*
 Clynton E. Ridgell *Clynton*
 Joe S. San Agustin *Joe*
 Telo T. Taitague *Telo*
 Jose "Pedo" Terlaje *Pedo*
Mary Camacho Torres *MC*

Relative to posthumously recognizing former Senior Jurist Pro Tempore for the Superior and Supreme Courts of Guam, Honorable Richard Hugh Benson for over 44 years of service in Pacific court systems and expressing condolences to his family on his passing on behalf of the people of Guam.

1 **BE IT RESOLVED BY *I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN***
2 ***GUÅHAN*:**

3 **WHEREAS, the late Honorable Richard Hugh Benson, former Senior Jurist Pro**
4 **Tempore for the Superior and Supreme Courts of Guam passed away on November 17,**
5 **2021 in Guam. He lived to be 95 and is survived by his wife, Beatrice "Betty" Benson,**

1 sister Barbara, his children Lang, Mark, and Marzieh; stepchildren, Shirin, Zeena, and
2 grandchildren, Ian, Matthew, Lua, Max, Mai, Ian, Dakota, and Dylan; and

3 **WHEREAS**, Judge Richard Benson began his civil service when he entered the
4 U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland on July 24, 1945 and graduated on June
5 3, 1949. Judge Benson continued to serve in the Navy for ten (10) years before obtaining
6 his Juris Doctor (J.D.) from the University of Michigan Law School in 1956. He entered
7 private practice in his home state of South Carolina and continued in Guam when he
8 moved to the island in 1966; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Judge Benson was a private attorney in Guam for three years before
10 being appointed by Governor Carlos G. Camacho to Island Court as a judge in 1970.
11 Four years later, Judge Benson would be appointed by the same Governor to the newly
12 formed Superior Court of Guam which consolidated Guam's Commissioners, Police,
13 and Island Courts. He would become the first judge to be retained by the people of
14 Guam by popular election in 1978; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Judge Benson made the selfless decision to retire from the Superior
16 Court of Guam in 1981 in order to develop the Federated States of Micronesia's
17 (FSM's) court system and serve as the first Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of
18 the FSM. He was appointed to this position by the FSM's first President, Tosiwo
19 Nakayama on October 31, 1980 and confirmed by the FSM Congress on November 8,
20 1980. This was a position Judge Benson did not have to take, but like his wife Betty
21 said, "He believed in the unity of mankind and strove for that. He was a judge [in Guam]
22 and doing very well, but gave it up to go and start a court [in the FSM] for a quarter of
23 the price." Judge Benson expressed his intention to only remain on the body until a
24 qualified Micronesian could succeed him, and pledged to help train and develop locals
25 for judicial leadership. He served as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the FSM
26 for two decades before retiring from this position in 2001; and

27 **WHEREAS**, Judge Benson's civil service in the Pacific did not stop for he
28 continued working in the court system when he returned to Guam in 2001. He served
29 as Judge Pro Tempore of the Superior Court of Guam and as Justice Pro Tempore of

1 the Supreme Court of Guam for eleven (11) years in addition to serving pro tempore in
2 other Micronesia courts, like the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern
3 Mariana Islands and the Supreme Court of the FSM. Judge Benson also accepted
4 appointment as a Part Time Associate Justice in the Palau Supreme Court in 2009,
5 where he showed great care in interpreting law and administering justice. He retired
6 from this position in 2015; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Judge Benson’s dedication to the law was assuredly matched only
8 by his dedication to his chosen faith, which he served vigorously on a worldwide scale.
9 He did so during his formative years of joining the Bahá’i Faith, when at times it made
10 it difficult for him to secure employment in his chosen profession. In many instances
11 during the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, Judge Benson was a man ahead of his time as
12 a promoter of racial equality and interracial gatherings within his faith. Judge Benson
13 would go on to pioneer the Pacific as a Bahá’i, eventually serving in the capacity as
14 Continental Counsellor; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Judge Benson also contributed to the community through non-
16 profit work, dedicating much of his work toward peaceful conflict resolution through
17 mediation for domestic and civil disputes through the non-profit organization
18 Inafa’Maolek. Through his work with Inafa’Maolek, Judge Benson mediated over 50
19 cases. And during its existence, Judge Benson also mediated and arbitrated cases for
20 Guam International Arbitration Center; and

21 **WHEREAS**, in recognition and appreciation of Judge Benson’s dedicated
22 service to improving justice throughout the Micronesia, the Judiciary of Guam awarded
23 him the 2012 Hustisia Award which is given annually by the Judiciary of Guam to a
24 person or organization that has contributed significantly to the improvement of the
25 administration of justice. Judge Benson served as Senior Judge Pro Tempore on the
26 Superior Court of Guam up until and including 2014; now therefore, be it

27 **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'trentai Sais Na Liheslaturan Guåhan* does hereby, on
28 behalf of the people of Guam, posthumously recognize former Senior Jurist Pro
29 Tempore for the Superior and Supreme Courts of Guam, Honorable Richard Hugh

1 Benson for over 44 years of service in Pacific court systems and express condolences
2 to his family on his passing; and be it further

3 **RESOLVED**, that the Speaker certify, and the Legislative Secretary attest to, the
4 adoption hereof, and that copies of the same be thereafter transmitted to Beatrice
5 “Betty” Benson, on behalf of the Benson family; the Honorable F. Philip Carbullido,
6 Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Guam; and to the Honorable Lourdes A. Leon
7 Guerrero, *I Maga'hâgan Guâhan*.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED BY *I MINA'TRENTAI SAIS NA LIHESLATURAN GUÂHAN* ON THE DAY OF DECEMBER 2021.

THERESE M. TERLAJE
Speaker

AMANDA L. SHELTON
Legislative Secretary