



RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Harris County Commissioners Court proudly joins in celebrating the 90th birthday of Jerry Dunfey, a lifelong advocate for civil rights, global peace, and social justice whose work as a hotelier, movement builder, and civic leader has impacted communities across the nation and the world; and

WHEREAS, born on May 23rd, 1935, in Lowell, Massachusetts, Jerry Dunfey was the eleventh of twelve children raised by Leroy and Catherine Dunfey, and began working alongside his siblings at a young age in the family’s luncheonette—an early lesson in hard work and service that would define his life; and

WHEREAS, Jerry and his brothers built upon their family’s restaurant roots to found Dunfey Hotels in 1958, later becoming Omni Hotels and Resorts, with landmark properties including the historic Parker House in Boston, the Omni Atlanta, and the Omni Houston; and

WHEREAS, during the civil rights era, Jerry opened the Parker House Hotel to national and local leaders, creating space for courageous conversations between activists, business leaders, and elected officials to build trust and promote social change; and

WHEREAS, he went on to found Global Citizens Circle in 1974, an organization dedicated to advancing dialogue across differences, which has brought together more than 40,000 participants—including Nobel laureates and grassroots changemakers—for Circles held in cities around the globe; and

WHEREAS, Jerry and his wife Nadine Hack have maintained lifelong ties to the civil rights movement, serving on the board of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, campaigning for Ambassador Andrew Young, and honoring the legacy of Coretta Scott King as readers and honorary pallbearers at her funeral; and

WHEREAS, he played an active role in South Africa’s liberation movement, participating in Senator Edward Kennedy’s 1985 delegation, attending President Nelson Mandela’s inauguration as a guest of state, and receiving the National Order of the Grand Companion of OR Tambo for his international solidarity and contributions to democracy; and

WHEREAS, his commitment to peace and justice also includes decades of work in Northern Ireland and the Middle East, as well as leadership in numerous human rights and development organizations such as the South Africa Development Fund, TransAfrica, and the American Ireland Funds; and

WHEREAS, Jerry Dunfey has also been a steadfast figure in Democratic politics for more than 70 years, from campaigning for Adlai Stevenson to supporting John F. Kennedy’s presidential run and mentoring new generations of civic leaders, including his children and grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, as he reaches this remarkable milestone, Jerry Dunfey continues to be a source of wisdom and inspiration to his loving family—including five children, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren expected this year—and to all who share his vision of a more just and equitable world; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Harris County Commissioners Court hereby commends Jerry Dunfey on the occasion of his 90th birthday and honors his extraordinary lifetime of leadership, advocacy, and service in pursuit of peace, justice, and human dignity.

ADOPTED on this 16th day of April 2025 by Harris County Commissioners Court, Harris County, Texas.

LINA HIDALGO, County Judge

RODNEY ELLIS, Commissioner
Precinct One

ADRIAN GARCIA, Commissioner
Precinct Two

TOM S. RAMSEY, P.E., Commissioner
Precinct Three

LESLEY BRIONES, Commissioner
Precinct Four

ATTEST:

Teneshia Hudspeth, County Clerk
Harris County, T E X A S