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House of Representatives

HONORING JUDGE EARL B. GILLIAM: A TRULY GREAT SAN DIEGO LEADER!

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise to honor a truly great San Diego leader. Judge Earl B. Gilliam made a positive impact on San Diego as a judge, a teacher, and a community leader. I have introduced a bill (H.R. 4474) that will appropriately honor him by putting his name on a new post office in my district.

Earl Gilliam grew up in southeast San Diego. His parents owned a fish market on Imperial Avenue where he worked when he was not attending San Diego High School. He went on to complete his undergraduate education at San Diego State University before moving on to Hastings Law School.

Shortly after being admitted to the California Bar in 1957, he was appointed

Deputy District Attorney in San Diego. He became the first African-American judge appointed to the San Diego bench 6 years later and was named Presiding Judge of the San Diego Municipal Court in 1971. Governor Jerry Brown named him to the California Superior Court in 1975 and President Jimmy Carter appointed him to serve on the United States District Court for the Southern District of California in 1980. He served there for over 20 years, until his passing in 2001.

In his long, distinguished career Judge Gilliam presided over numerous noteworthy trials of regional and national importance. Whether these cases dealt with drug trafficking, fraud, tax evasion, bribery, or civil matters, Judge Gilliam's

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fair and professional approach to the law laid the foundation for his solid reputation both within and outside the legal community.

In addition to his contributions in the courtroom, Judge Gilliam also made his mark in the classroom. The Thomas Jefferson School of Law recruited Judge Gilliam as an adjunct professor. With his background in business, economics, and civil, criminal, and trial law, he proved to be an inspirational and devoted instructor for the numerous courses he taught there over the next 24 years. So much so that the school's moot courtroom has been dedicated in his honor.

Judge Gilliam gave his time and effort to his community in countless ways. He served on the boards of numerous organizations ranging from the San Diego Urban League to the University of California, San Diego to the Y.M.C.A.

The community, in turn, has honored Judge Gilliam repeatedly with an unbelievably long, diverse list of awards that attest to his unrelenting success in making a difference in San Diego.

In 1982, the San Diego African American Lawyer's Organization honored Judge Gilliam by changing its name to the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association. Today, they carry on his legacy by working within our community to defend the rights of African-Americans, combat racism and poverty, and foster integrity in the legal community.

Judge Gilliam truly was a hero who worked for all of San Diego. I am glad to have the privilege of introducing this legislation to name a post office in his honor and I hope my colleagues will support me in celebrating his many achievements.