

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 184

BY REPRESENTATIVE GAINES

A RESOLUTION

To commend Ava Marie DuVernay, an American director, screenwriter, film marketer, and film distributor, for her many accomplishments.

WHEREAS, born on August 24, 1972, in Long Beach, California, Ava Marie DuVernay attended Saint Joseph High School, where she graduated in 1990; she furthered her education at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in 1995; and

WHEREAS, throughout her college years, Ms. DuVernay became interested in producing for broadcast journalism; she interned at CBS News and worked on the national evening news with Connie Chung and Dan Rather during the O.J. Simpson murder trial; and

WHEREAS, Ms. DuVernay decided to focus on publicity; after her college graduation, she worked at FOX, Savoy Pictures, and other public relations firms for four years before she formed her own agency, The DuVernay Agency, later known as DVA Media + Marketing, in 1999; and

WHEREAS, her award winning marketing and publicity firm has provided strategy and execution for more than one hundred film and television projects by many famous directors, such as Steven Spielberg, Clint Eastwood, Michael Mann, Robert Rodriguez, Kevin Smith, Bill Condon, Raoul Peck, and Gurinder Chadha; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, Ms. DuVernay made her feature directorial debut with the documentary *This Is the Life*, a history of Los Angeles' Good Life Cafe's arts movement; in 2011, her first narrative feature film titled *I Will Follow*, starring Salli Richardson-Whitfield, was released theatrically; Ms. DuVernay's aunt, Denise Sexton, served as the inspiration for this film; and

WHEREAS, Roger Ebert recognized *I Will Follow* as one of the best films he had seen about coming to terms with the death of a loved one; the film was also an official selection of the American Film Institute Fest, the Pan-African Film Festival, and the Urbanworld and Chicago International Film Festival; and

WHEREAS, at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival, Ms. DuVernay won the Best Director prize for her second feature film, *Middle of Nowhere*; she became the first African American woman to receive this award; and

WHEREAS, Ms. DuVernay also directed and co-wrote the movie *Selma*, a twenty million dollar budget movie produced by Plan B Entertainment; and

WHEREAS, the unforgettable story chronicles the tumultuous Selma movement organized and led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; culminated by the courageous events of "Bloody Sunday" and the historic "Selma to Montgomery March", the film vividly depicted the institutional challenges and brutality faced by the committed protest organizers and brave marchers; and

WHEREAS, *Selma* is recognized as being one of the most powerful movies ever produced; it pulls together a very complex series of elements into a single narrative flow while accurately displaying the heart, spirit, sacrifices, and ultimate triumph of the Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, the movie was released on December 25, 2014, and was nominated for Best Picture and Best Song by the Academy Awards; and

WHEREAS, for her work with *Selma*, Ms. DuVernay was the first black female director nominated for a Golden Globe Award and the first black female director to have a film nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize and commend Ava Marie DuVernay, an American director, screenwriter, film marketer, and film distributor, upon her many accomplishments and for the great pride she brings to the film industry.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Ava Marie DuVernay for her many accomplishments as an American director, screenwriter, film marketer, and film distributor and does hereby extend to her every good wish of success in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Ava Marie DuVernay.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES