

JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (GSA) AND
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION COUNCIL (USAC)
RECOGNIZING AND HONORING
RAFER LEWIS JOHNSON

Date: October 13, 2021

WHEREAS, on December 2, 2020, one of UCLA's most distinguished athletes, Rafer Lewis Johnson, passed away at age 86; and

WHEREAS, he was the 1960 Olympic gold medalist in the decathlon, after winning silver in 1956 and gold in the 1955 Pan American Games; and

WHEREAS, at the 1960 Rome Olympics, Johnson was the U.S. team's flag bearer, the first Black American to do so, and that he was also honored with lighting the Olympic Flame at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, after the Olympics, Mr. Johnson turned his celebrity into public service, co-founding the California Special Olympics in 1969 and serving as its president for ten years; and

WHEREAS, on June 5, 1968, when Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated, Mr. Johnson helped subdue the gunman at great personal risk to prevent additional violence; and

WHEREAS, Rafer was the Undergraduate Students Association President in 1958-59 and served on the Board of Directors during his tenure; and

WHEREAS, in 1959 Rafer was instrumental in obtaining a grant to build a new student union which is now known as Ackerman Union serving thousands of Bruins every day; and

WHEREAS, as an undergraduate, Mr. Johnson was a two-sport athlete at UCLA, competing in track and field and playing basketball for another legendary Bruin, John Wooden; and

WHEREAS, Rafer used his platform to advocate and advance racial and social justice; and

WHEREAS, Rafer was the embodiment of how to be a role model – a humanitarian, philanthropist, friend, mentor, family man, and gracious well beyond his years of being in the spotlight; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE GRADUATE AND
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS WISHES TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR RAFER
LEWIS JOHNSON FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BETTERMENT OF THIS
COMMUNITY AND HUMANITY AND FOR REPRESENTING THE BEST OF BRUINS
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**
