

Chapter No. 2180

11/SS26/R1233

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***SENATE  
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION  
No. 605***

Originated in Senate

*Jenna Woodruff*

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 605

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE LEGACY OF MEDGAR WILEY EVERS IN THE HISTORY OF MISSISSIPPI.

WHEREAS, as Mississippi celebrates "Black History Month," we acknowledge the legacy of Medgar Evers. Medgar Wiley Evers, known as "The Man in Mississippi," is a seminal figure in the history of the American Civil Rights Movement; and

WHEREAS, the third of four children, Medgar was born on July 2, 1925, in Decatur, Mississippi, to James and Jessie Evers. Evers grew up in a devoutly religious home in segregated Mississippi, where services and accommodations such as schools and public facilities were specified for "Colored" or "White" use; and

WHEREAS, despite the fact that he could not attend the same theaters or drink from the same fountains as white Mississippians, like many men of his generation, Evers left his home to enlist in the military following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Although he was serving his country against its foreign enemies, Evers soon became disillusioned by the fact that while he was supposedly fighting for freedom of people halfway around the world, his own nation was rooted in the unequal segregationist ideology of separation and white supremacy. Evers' experiences of the racist sentiments of white citizens as an African-American soldier demonstrated to him the need for action; and

WHEREAS, emboldened by lessons learned while at war, Evers returned to Mississippi and dedicated himself to academic studies at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1952. Evers was acutely aware of the need to continue the struggle against injustice and soon became an

important member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Jackson, Mississippi. From 1954 until his assassination in 1963, Evers traveled throughout Mississippi organizing African-Americans in peaceful protest, economic boycotts, political sit-ins, and voter registration drives to draw national and world attention to unjust practices; and

WHEREAS, elected the first Field Secretary of the NAACP, Evers created new strategies to enfranchise and empower African-Americans. As Dr. Patricia Murrain writes, "...articulating the demands of the black masses, Evers was instrumental in wielding hosts of fragmented, inarticulate and somewhat ineffective voices into unification." Evers' work was instrumental to many political and social victories for African-Americans in Mississippi, most notably the admission of James Meredith to the previously white-only University of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, however, on June 12, 1963, "The Man in Mississippi," who was the voice of so many disenfranchised Americans, was silenced by a shot to the back in the driveway of his home; and

WHEREAS, Medgar Evers was one of the first martyrs of the Civil Rights Movement. His death prompted President John Kennedy to ask Congress for a comprehensive civil-rights bill, which President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the following year; and

WHEREAS, following Evers' assassination, his wife Myrlie continued his legacy by traveling around the world stressing the positive achievements of the Civil Rights Movement and the necessity to continue the struggle until the dream of equality is realized. Myrlie Evers has remained a stalwart figure in the struggle for Civil Rights up to the present, serving as Chairperson of the NAACP's Board of Directors from 1995 to 1998; and

WHEREAS, Medgar Evers College was founded as a senior college of the City University of New York in 1969 through a partnership between the educators and community leaders in Central Brooklyn. Although Medgar Evers was born into a world where people of different races were not allowed to mix, students and faculty of Medgar Evers College gather each day in the community of harmony, equality and understanding for which he gave his life; and

WHEREAS, older brother of the civil rights martyr, Charles Evers introduced Medgar to the United States Civil Rights Movement. Charles Evers and B.B. King sponsor the Medgar Evers Homecoming Festival, a three-day annual event held the first week of June each year in Mississippi. This event features parades, gospel festivities and a blues show to celebrate the life and work of the late civil rights activist, Medgar Evers; and

WHEREAS, Medgar Evers saw the Civil Rights Movement as a Christian movement teaching love, liberation and equality for all under the law, and it is appropriate that we acknowledge the legacy of this nationally mourned Mississippi leader:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That, as a part of "Black History Month," we do hereby recognize the legacy of Medgar Wiley Evers and acknowledge his contributions to the history of the State of Mississippi.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the family of Medgar Evers and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE  
February 16, 2011

  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
February 22, 2011

  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES