

Chapter No. 2031
12/HR12/R1326
EW / CST

***HOUSE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 50***

Originated in House Liz Welch Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 50

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION HONORING CHANCELLOR DENISE OWENS, CHANCELLOR PATRICIA WISE, JUDGE BETTY W. SANDERS, JUDGE LILLIE SANDERS AND JUDGE ERMEA J. RUSSELL AS THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE JUDGES IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI.

WHEREAS, honoring the achievements of the first African-American female judges in Mississippi is commendable evidence of the progression toward equality in this state; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Denise Owens and Chancellor Patricia Wise were the first African-American female chancery court judges in the state, both coming to the bench in 1989 to the State of Mississippi Chancery Court, Fifth District, in Hinds County; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Owens is a 1972 graduate of Tougaloo College and a 1979 graduate of George Washington University Law School, and prior to her election to the bench, Chancellor Owens was a partner and managing attorney in the firm of Owens and Owens, as well as an adjunct professor at Hinds Community College and Jackson State University's Business School, and Chancellor Owens is a member of the National Association of Women Judges and serves as advisory council to the Council on Legal Education Opportunity; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Wise is a graduate of the University of Mississippi, where she received both her undergraduate degree and law degree prior to moving to Jackson to practice law with the firm of Dockins and Wise before her election to the bench, and Chancellor Wise served as a Special Master to the Chancery Court and is a current member of the Supreme Court Complaint Tribunal and Ethics Committee of the Mississippi Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Judge Betty W. Sanders is the first African-American female to be elected to the State of Mississippi Circuit Court, and she is a graduate of Alcorn State University, Bowling Green State University and the University of Mississippi Law School; and

WHEREAS, prior to her election to the Fourth Judicial District's Post 3, Judge Sanders and her husband were focused on building a public service law practice in the Mississippi Delta, and she has been elected to serve on the Commission for Judicial Performance and selected to serve on the Supreme Court Complaint Tribunal and Ethics Committee of the Mississippi Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Judge Lillie Sanders was appointed to the State of Mississippi Circuit Court in 1989 by Governor Ray Mabus to serve an unexpired term, and she is a graduate of Alcorn State University and the University of Mississippi Law School; and

WHEREAS, before her appointment to the bench, Judge Sanders served as a municipal court judge, a youth court public defender and a partner in Sanders Law Firm in Natchez, and she currently presides over the Sixth Judicial District Adult Drug Court Program; and

WHEREAS, Judge Ermea J. Russell, who holds her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Livingston University and a law degree from Mississippi College School of Law, became the first African-American female to sit on the Mississippi Court of Appeals after her appointment to the bench by Governor Haley Barbour in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Judge Russell is a decorated veteran with over 37 years' military experience, boasting an incredible resumé, she has worked for the federal government, all three branches of state government and has advised officials of fledgling foreign democracies such as the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia and the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to honor historical and significant role models in our state, such as Chancellor Denise Owens, Chancellor Patricia Wise, Judge Betty W. Sanders, Judge Lillie Sanders and Judge Ermea J. Russell, the first African-American female judges on Mississippi's courts, who have brought great honor to themselves, their families, their communities and to this state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby honor and recognize these five remarkable women: Chancellor Denise Owens and Chancellor Patricia Wise, the first African-American females to be elected to the State of Mississippi Chancery Court; Judge Betty W. Sanders, the first African-American female to be elected to the State of Mississippi Circuit Court; Judge Lillie Sanders, the first African-American female to be appointed to the State of Mississippi Circuit Court; and Judge Ermea J. Russell, the first African-American female to sit on the Mississippi Court of Appeals, and extend best wishes for future success in all of their endeavors.

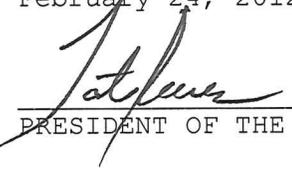
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be made available to Chancellor Denise Owens, Chancellor Patricia Wise, Judge Betty W. Sanders, Judge Lillie Sanders, Judge Ermea J. Russell, the Old Capitol Museum and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 21, 2012



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 24, 2012



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE