

Chapter No. 2189

12/SS02/R1291

JN RS/SG

***SENATE  
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION  
No. 641***

Originated in Senate

Liz Welch

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 641

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING  
PICAYUNE EDUCATOR DONNA PORTER FOR HER NATIONAL SELECTION FOR THE  
2012 KENNEDY CENTER/STEPHEN SONDHEIM INSPIRATIONAL TEACHER AWARD.

WHEREAS, Donna Porter, a 25-year veteran of the Picayune School District who now teaches speech and communications, has been honored as one of 10 teachers selected for the 2012 Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Award. The \$10,000 grant is bestowed annually to recognize specific teachers by spotlighting their extraordinary impact on the lives of students; and

WHEREAS, the grants honor Broadway Composer Stephen Sondheim on his 80th birthday. The grants are funded through a gift from Freddie Gershon, Chairman and CEO of the licensing group Music Theatre International. Teachers from kindergarten through college level are eligible. Sondheim has won more Tony Awards than any other composer; and

WHEREAS, Donna's student, Dewayne "D.J." Batiste, gave her a huge return on her investment. Unknown to Porter, Batiste submitted a 500-word essay that said "Mrs. P" changed his life's path from one of trouble to the one he now walks. He is now a first-generation high school graduate (Class of 2009) looking forward to an associate's degree in communication from Pearl River Community College and a future in education, where he can make an impact on others' lives. Batiste said in his essay, "Three minutes into third period I barged through the door, threw my backpack on the ground, and interrupted Mrs. Porter. She said it was obvious I liked attention, and her class is where I could get

attention in appropriate ways." He went on to say the exchange took 90 seconds but changed his attitude about class, about learning and about life; and

WHEREAS, "The award looks for teachers who, with one moment, transform a life," Porter said. D.J. was a potential dropout and Porter changed all that with a 90-second exchange in her communications class. In D.J.'s essay he stated, "It took 90 seconds. I was never late again to her class and graduated that year. I asked Mrs. Porter to walk arm-in-arm with me into the stadium as I accepted my diploma. The crowd broke into applause - for at least 90 seconds. Today, I am completing my second year of college, with the goal to finish my degree and teach. I tell my story to educators and students about a teacher who noticed me - for just 90 seconds"; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize this inspirational story about a student's life-changing experience directed by his teacher, and recognize a teacher who has brought honor to her school, her community and to the State of Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate Picayune Educator Donna Porter for her national selection for the 2012 Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Award, and extend our best wishes to Donna and her family for her future successes.

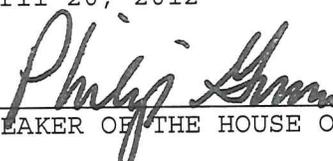
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Donna Porter, forwarded to Kent Kirkland, Principal of Picayune

Memorial High School, the Picayune School Board, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE  
April 10, 2012

  
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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
April 20, 2012

  
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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES