

Chapter No. 2101

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***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 509***

Originated in Senate

Liz Welch

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 509

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMENDING THE DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVICE AND BUSINESS LEGACY OF FORMER HATTIESBURG MAYOR AND MISSISSIPPI ICON BOBBY LEE CHAIN.

WHEREAS, Bobby Lee Chain, September 19, 1929, through May 31, 2014, of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, led a remarkable life. To him, the most important things were his family, business, church, community and country. With his family being priority, this Mississippi icon, entrepreneur, businessman and politician has made a profound impact at the local, state and national levels; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Bobby always had a passion for his state and hometown and has dedicated himself to its improvement and development. He attended public schools, graduated from Demonstration High School at Mississippi Southern College, received a Bachelor of Science degree in Building Construction Technology from The University of Southern Mississippi and received an Honorary Doctorate in Business Administration from William Carey University. His love for the

City of Hattiesburg, The University of Southern Mississippi and William Carey are well known to those closest to him; and

WHEREAS, Chain began his business career as a boy selling newspapers at Camp Shelby. After serving in the Korean War and with full confidence in his hometown business environment, Bobby began Chain Electric Company in 1955 with meager resources of \$2,200.00. Today, Chain Electric Company is a multistate commercial, industrial and utility contractor, and a pillar of the Hattiesburg business community. The phenomenal growth and rich history of Chain Electric Company brought the firm to be named as the No. 2 fastest-growing private company in Mississippi in 2009. Bobby also served as Chairman and CEO of CHAINCO, an exploration and petroleum investment firm. He was awarded the Rotary Club's Albert Gallatin Award for Outstanding Businessman for Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee, and received the Mississippi College Executive Excellence Award in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Bobby served as Mayor of Hattiesburg from 1980-1986 where he worked hard to bring more economic opportunities to the city. The naming of the "Bobby L. Chain Municipal Airport" in the Hattiesburg Industrial Park recognized his dedication and support to improve aviation facilities and services in the area. In addition, Bobby was the first to receive the Hub Award in 1979 and he recently donated land to the city for the development of Chain Park; and

WHEREAS, for the last 45 years, Bobby was involved in the organization and direction of numerous financial institutions at the local, state, and national levels where he served on many boards and held officer positions. Most recently, after serving an eight-year term, he retired from the Board of Directors of the Federal Home Loan Bank of the United States, assigned to Dallas, Texas; and

WHEREAS, Bobby's drive, determination and willingness to serve resulted in appointments to working boards and commissions, in a wide array of disciplines in business, industry, government and education. Highlighting these include an appointment by President Lyndon Johnson to the National Advisory Council for Small Business Administration in 1964 and serving on the Mississippi Research and Development Foundation from 1972-1984. In 2002, Bobby was recognized, along with Congressman Sonny Montgomery, as a member of Friends of West Point. The United States Military Academy, Center for Oral History, recognized him with a Formal Announcement May 13, 2008, for his contribution to the program at the Academy; and

WHEREAS, Bobby's greatest impact on education was his appointment to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. He was appointed to a 12-year term, 1972-1984, and served as President of the Board from 1978-1980. During his time on the College Board, and with Mississippi facing a shortage of doctors, he led a successful effort to have Doctors of

Osteopathy educated and licensed to practice in Mississippi. Today a College of Osteopathic Medicine is graduating its first class in Mississippi at William Carey University; and

WHEREAS, Bobby's further roles impacting education include serving as Chairman of the Pearl River College Advanced Technology Center, a member of The University of Southern Mississippi College of Business Advisory Board, The University of Southern Mississippi Foundation Board, and Mississippi College Foundation Board. President Ronald Reagan appointed Bobby to the National Advisory Council on Adult Education from 1984-1988. The technology building at The University of Southern Mississippi bears the name "Bobby L. Chain Technology Center," recognizing his further contribution to education, particularly higher education. His most recent contribution to education was to serve as National Coordinator of the Trent Lott National Center for Excellence in Economic Development and Entrepreneurship, raising \$15 Million of the \$22.8 Million required to construct the Center. The "Chain Garden," located on the campus of William Carey University, was given by the Chain family in 1992 and was recently renovated. This beautifully landscaped garden is highlighted by a six-foot bronze statue cast in Italy, "The Risen Christ"; and

WHEREAS, "His interest in education continued throughout his life," longtime friend Aubrey Lucas said. "He was an enthusiastic supporter of higher education - both public and private though he had a particular duty to public higher education. But he also was

interested in private higher education - particularly William Carey and Mississippi College. We will miss him greatly, but we will always have wonderful memories of friendship and also his support for higher education"; and

WHEREAS, in a recent book about Bobby, *The Life and Journal of a Mississippi Entrepreneur*, former Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour said, "Bobby Chain is a shining example of the things that make Mississippi such a special place"; and

WHEREAS, Bobby is survived by his wife of 48 years, the former Betty Green of Hattiesburg; four children: Robin (Joe) Gordy, Laura Felsher, Bob (Christy) Chain, and John (Kerri) Chain; 11 grandchildren: Harley, Madison, Margaret and Chase Felsher, Catie and Ellie Chain, Webb, Anna Caroline and Sellers Chain, Mary Katherine (Brad) Easley and Leigh Ann (Alston) McMahon; three great-grandchildren: Abby, Emma, and Anna Bradley Easley; and a number of nieces and nephews. Bobby is preceded in death by his father, Zollie Lee Chain; his mother, Grace Sellers Chain; and his sister, Nell Chain. Bobby was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church of Hattiesburg; and

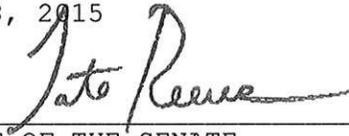
WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi has lost one of its most devoted and estimable citizens and we pay tribute and cherish fondly the memory and enormous civic energy of this most public spirited citizen of our State:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That

we do hereby mourn the loss and commend the dedicated public service and business legacy of former Hattiesburg and Mississippi Icon Bobby Lee Chain, and extend the sympathy of the Legislature to his surviving family.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the surviving family of Bobby Chain, forwarded to the Mayor and City Council of Hattiesburg and to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
January 8, 2015



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 14, 2015



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES