

Chapter No. 2184  
15/SS01/R1089  
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***SENATE  
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION  
No. 609***

Originated in Senate *L. Welch* Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 609

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE PASSING OF OLE MISS AND NFL FOOTBALL STAR DOUGLAS (DOUG) CUNNINGHAM OF LOUISVILLE, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Doug Cunningham, an Ole Miss and NFL football great and Mississippi Sports Hall of Famer, died Tuesday, January 13, 2015. Cunningham, a native of Louisville and resident of Jackson, was 69; and

WHEREAS, after his football career Cunningham was a popular Jackson Restaurateur, known for his graciousness, charm and wit, operating both Gridley's and Swenson's; and

WHEREAS, as a halfback, wingback and kick returner at Ole Miss, Cunningham averaged nine yards per time he touched the ball over three varsity seasons. In 1966, he led Ole Miss to an 8-3 record and was named to the All-Southeastern Conference. His combination of pure speed and elusiveness made him one of the most dangerous open-field runners in Mississippi football annals. You would never know it from talking to Cunningham, who was as modest as he was quick and fast; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, Ole Miss trailed Southern Miss 7-0 in the fourth quarter. USM had never beaten Ole Miss but seemed well on its way. Then, USM made the mistake of punting to Cunningham. Years later, John Grisham, the famous author, wrote about Cunningham's return: "The Rebel Return Man, Doug Cunningham, No. 22, sprang from nowhere, took the ball, and was immediately surrounded by white jerseys. He was hit, broke a tackle, hit again, shook himself free, darted one way then the other, and suddenly emerged from a pile of humanity with his legs pumping, his knees high in the air, his hips twisting, and two blockers in front of him. The crowd erupted. Cunningham cut to the sideline and hit the afterburners. For a few brief seconds, time that is still frozen in my memory, Doug Cunningham galloped toward the north end zone with unmatched speed, and crossed the goal line all alone. He circled by a fence, long since removed, and nonchalantly flipped the ball to the official. No bodily gyrations. No ripping off his helmet so the world could see him. No showy prayer. No struggling or somersaults. Just a casual little lateral of the ball, as if he had been in the end zone before"; and

WHEREAS, Doug Cunningham and Famed Football Coach Steve Spurrier were rookie teammates together with the San Francisco 49ers. "When we all first saw Doug run, nobody on the team could believe how fast he was," Spurrier said. He was a sixth-round draft choice of the 49ers, and, as a rookie, was nicknamed

"Goober" because his teammates thought he sounded like Goober in the *Andy Griffith* TV show; and

WHEREAS, Ron Fimrite, of *Sports Illustrated*, then a young San Francisco Sports Writer, described Cunningham's performance in a game against the Minnesota Vikings in which Cunningham had a 64-yard run from scrimmage and a 57-yard punt return. Wrote Fimrite: "It was not just the length of these runs but the manner in which they were accomplished that endeared the little man to us all. Both were fraught with danger along the way. Cunningham spun, dodged, and bounced off tacklers"; and

WHEREAS, Cunningham was as popular off the field as on it. He was elected Colonel Rebel, the equivalent of Mr. Ole Miss, as a senior; and

WHEREAS, born on September 14, 1945, in Louisville, Mississippi, Cunningham graduated from Louisville High School in 1963 after earning All-Southern, All-State and All-Conference honors during his senior season in 1962. Coached in high school by Fred Morris, he was selected Most Valuable Player in the Choctaw Conference in 1962 when Louisville High won the League Championship; and

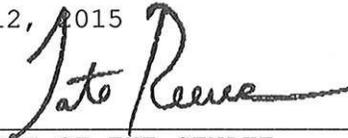
WHEREAS, Cunningham was preceded in death by his parents, Margaret and Julian Cunningham, and brother, Stanley Cunningham. He is survived by his wife, Allen Townes Cunningham; and sisters Sherry (Tim) Byrne of Flowood, Madalyn (Steve) Hindman of Jackson, Janice (Bobby) Adkinson of Starkville, and Lisa Speier of Denver.

WHEREAS, Doug will be missed. While he has departed this earth, Doug's worldly impact on his many friends, the Ole Miss family and the State of Mississippi that he loved will never be forgotten:

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 passing of Ole Miss and NFL Football Star Douglas (Doug) Cunningham of Louisville, Mississippi, and express the sympathy of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the surviving family of Doug Cunningham, forwarded to the Director of the University of Mississippi Alumni Association, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE  
March 12, 2015



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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
March 17, 2015



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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES