

Chapter No. 2229
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***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 658***

Originated in Senate *Jzwela* Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 658

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND THANKING SYNDICATED COLUMNIST BILL MINOR FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO MISSISSIPPI HISTORY AND TO THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

WHEREAS, Syndicated Columnist and Capitol Correspondent Bill Minor has covered Mississippi politics since 1947. He was an eyewitness to the Mississippi's Civil Rights history and the formation of the Mississippi Republican Party; and

WHEREAS, Bill Minor has followed Mississippi political and social life for more than 60 years. He has put himself in harm's way many times to witness firsthand and report in vivid and clear words the truth, regardless of the consequences to himself. Minor still lives in Jackson, Mississippi, and writes many columns concerning major news stories and issues; and

WHEREAS, Bill Minor was born in Hammond, Louisiana. He grew up in Southeast Louisiana and graduated from Tulane University in 1943 with a degree in Journalism. Following World War II, this naval combat veteran joined the staff of *The Times-Picayune* in New Orleans. In August 1947, he was assigned as the newspaper's

Mississippi correspondent in Jackson, Mississippi. Covering the Civil Rights era and a wide variety of other major news stories, Minor held this position for 30 years and ended only when *The Times-Picayune* closed the Mississippi office. He retired from the paper in 1976. Since his retirement he remains in Jackson and has launched a new career as a statewide political columnist, a position which he still holds today; and

WHEREAS, "My own situation in those Civil Rights decades was a unique one," Minor explained in a recent article. "I was something of a war correspondent behind enemy lines covering the battle of blacks to achieve first-class citizenship." Black protest in the South and the frequently violent white response transfixed the nation. *Newsweek*, *AP* and *The New York Times* used Minor as a Stringer, and he contributed features to the *New Republic*, *The Herald Tribune*, and other prominent publications. The reporter filed an enormous number of stories. Just for *The Times-Picayune* alone, Minor estimates, he wrote an average of three news stories a day, over 1,000 a year. The Sunday *Times-Picayune* published *Eyes on Mississippi*, an op-ed style column that allowed Minor to express his own views; and

WHEREAS, some of the most horrific events of the Civil Rights Movement occurred in Mississippi, drawing news people from across the nation. The trial in 1955 of two men accused of lynching 14-year-old Emmett Till attracted scores of out-of-state and foreign reporters. A standing-room-only crowd packed the

courthouse then, and it did again on March 21, 2015, this time to honor the Emmett Till family. Journalist Bill Minor, who covered the trial, marveled at the restoration of the courtroom. Minor pointed to the room where the jury considered the fate of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant. He recalled hearing laughter from the room during deliberations; and

WHEREAS, the 1960s were a time of challenge, stress and glory for Minor. Black protests and white resistance made Mississippi a difficult and dangerous place for a fair-minded and dedicated reporter. Minor's colleagues in the national press recall their admiration for his work. Minor, as a Stringer for the national media, contributed to numerous widely read stories about events in his home state. In 1963, former Governor J.P. Coleman gave the reporter transcripts of secret telephone negotiations between U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and Governor Ross Barnett over James Meredith's admission to the University of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Minor is most proud of a story he uncovered for the *Picayune* in 1961, seven years after the Supreme Court declared school segregation unconstitutional and three years before the integration of any public grade school or high school in Mississippi. A contact at the State Department of Education gave the reporter a secret, state-sponsored report of local expenditures by race of every school district in the state. In some school districts white children received \$100.00 to every \$1.00 spent on a black child. That information never would have

seen the light of day except for Bill Minor, and was used by Congress in their arguments for passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, Bill Minor's novel, *Eyes on Mississippi: A Fifty-Year Chronicle of Change*, is fascinating to everyone interested in 20th Century American History. Minor used some 200 of his columns and news articles in this novel. This novel reminds the reader of all the progress we have made in Mississippi and how much more there is left to do. It chronicles changes in race relations, from the increase in black voter registrations to the unraveling of the Sovereignty Commission; and

WHEREAS, Minor has won many awards. In 1966 the Louis Lyons Award given by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University was given to him for "conscience and integrity in journalism." In 1997 Minor became the first recipient of the John Chancellor Award for Excellence in Journalism presented by the Annenberg School for Communications of Pennsylvania, and in 1991 he joined the Hall of Fame for the Mississippi Press Association; and

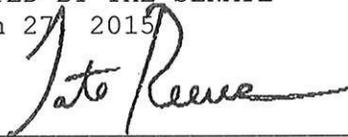
WHEREAS, the members of the Capitol Press Corps are vital parts of the legislative process by the timely reporting of the daily actions of the House and Senate to the public in order for public input into the deliberative process. Bill Minor served as a leader and mentor in the Capitol Press Corps. His legacy of historical reporting and remarkable intellect have enriched the

reporting skills of his students and colleagues. Bill Minor is truly one of a kind:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize and thank Syndicated Columnist Bill Minor for his contributions to Mississippi History and to the Mississippi legislative process, and extend the best wishes of the Legislature to Bill and his family for future success.

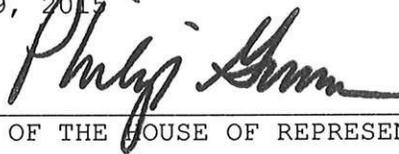
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Bill Minor, forwarded to the Editorial Board of *The Clarion Ledger*, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
March 27, 2015



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 29, 2015



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES