Chapter No. 2035
16/HR26/R2058
AM / GV

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 59

Originated in House _____ Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 59

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMEMORATING THE LIFE, LEGACY AND DISTINGUISHED FOOTBALL CAREER OF MR. WILLIE L. RICHARDSON, JR., AND EXPRESSING DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS UPON HIS PASSING.

WHEREAS, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the Heaven," and as such, God, in his divine providence in the orchestration of our lives' destiny of faith, love and service as the grand architect of the universe, the immaculate author and finisher of our soul's destiny, has brought to a close the life of beloved friend and Jackson State football's legendary icon, Mr. Willie L. Richardson, Jr., as his mortal presence has been summoned to Heaven's court of eternal rest, upon making life's final transition from earthly travailing to heavenly reward, rendering great sorrow and loss to his family and friends; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi, particularly the Jackson State University football fans and alumni association, and the citizens of the City of Jackson, lost a wonderful friend, avid sportsman,

former NFL Pro and College Football Hall of Famer on Monday, February 8, 2016, with the untimely demise of Mr. Richardson; and

WHEREAS, a native of Clarksdale, who was raised in Greenville, Mr. Richardson's formal education culminated with the receipt of his high school diploma from Coleman High School, before advancing his postsecondary matriculation at Jackson State University where he established himself as a force of reckoning on the football field and was a pioneering trailblazer that drew the eye of national attention to the university's football program and exceptional caliber of players that would flow from its channels after he was selected in the 7th round of the NFL Draft in 1963 by the Baltimore Colts; and

WHEREAS, a sure-footed, quick-handed, versatile athlete, Willie played nine seasons of professional football as a wide receiver, eight of which were spent with his drafting team, the Colts, which was interrupted by a one-year stint with the Miami Dolphins during the 1970 season, before returning to his beloved Colts in 1971, a career that culminated with a super bowl appearance in Super Bowl III, when the Colts matched up against the New York Jets, in addition to being named First Team All-Pro in 1967, and Pro Bowl selections in 1967 and 1968; and

WHEREAS, a three-time hall of famer, Mr. Richardson's skill, sheer athleticism and command of the game allowed him to amass a record of statistics that would place him in a rivalry of Mississippi's native sons as the three all-time top receivers to

go pro, along with Lance Alworth and Jerry Rice, and allowed him to be inducted into the Jackson State University Sports Hall of Fame, Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and the College Football Hall of Fame in the years 1978, 1979 and 2003 respectively; and

WHEREAS, after completing his league career, Mr. Richardson coached at Morgan State University for three years before making the ultimate decision to return home to Mississippi in 1979, upon the inquiry made of him by A.C. Butch Lambert during his Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame induction; and

WHEREAS, immediately upon his return, Willie went to work as a public sector employee, serving as Director of Enforcement in the Weight Division of the Mississippi State Tax Commission and reconnecting with his undergraduate alma mater through using his career in the NFL as a platform for recruiting prospective student athletes, and served as the colorful analyst for the Tigers' football games and host of the weekly hour-long show on ESPN, The Zone 105.9 FM; and

WHEREAS, as fate would lend itself to the building upon the blueprint divinely designed for the pattern of his life by the God-head of the Great Deity, Mr. Richardson's chivalry and affection pierced the heart of Earline O. Richardson, and the duo became bone of one another's bone and flesh of one another's flesh after exchanging the nuptials of holy matrimony more than 50 years ago, and completed their family unit with the fruitful addition of three children; and

WHEREAS, in Mr. Richardson's transfiguration from mortality to immortality, he now awaits in holy anticipation the wondrous event of the bridegroom's return, as it is written in the Book of Revelation 21:1-2 -- "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."; and

WHEREAS, though he has traversed the river of life to now stand upon the celestial shores of Heaven's grandeur, the legacy of Mr. Richardson will continue to refresh the hearts and fond memories of his beloved survivors: doting and caring wife, Earline O. Richardson; son, Willie L. Richardson III; daughters, Sonja Boyce and Shawn E. Terry; three brothers; one sister; six grandchildren; and a host of other relatives, colleagues and friends; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Richardson was a solemn voice of reason and beacon of inspirational hope, encompassed in the selfless humanitarianism of an individual of esteemed caliber who epitomized the highest standard of leadership, deference and fairness; and

WHEREAS, we encourage the family to find solace from the overwhelming sadness created by the earthly departure of their beloved family member in Revelation 21:4, wherein is recorded, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there

shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" and renewed in their faith that Mr. Richardson fulfilled the commandment of II Timothy 4:7 by having fought a good fight, finishing his course and keeping the faith until the hour of his departure was at hand; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to commend the outstanding life and legacy of such an exceptional athlete and son of Mississippi who has left a lasting impression upon the hearts of his family, friends and community:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby mourn the loss and commemorate the life, legacy and distinguished career of Mr. Willie L. Richardson, Jr., to whose family we express sincere and deepest sympathy upon the occasion of his passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to the family of Mr. Willie L. Richardson, Jr., and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 24, 2016

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 25, 2016

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE