Chapter No. 2023-7
16/HR31/R2059
EW / AM

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 61

Originated in House _____ Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 61

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING HOPE BERRY FOR BEING NAMED THE 2015 STATE GAMES OF MISSISSIPPI "FEMALE ATHLETE OF THE YEAR."

WHEREAS, each year, the State Games of Mississippi recognizes an outstanding male and female athlete from each of the 37 individual sports, nominated based on their merit and sportsmanship by coaches, officials, athletes, volunteers and spectators, but only two athletes are chosen to receive the elite honor of "Athlete of the Year"; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 "Female Athlete of the Year" is Hope Berry, a 7th grade martial arts prodigy whose age has not stopped her from accomplishing enormous feats that others merely dream about, all the while personifying the ideals of the State Games movement, including participation, sportsmanship, special attributes, achievements, efforts and positive attitude; and

WHEREAS, at the age of five, Hope Berry began her martial arts career only after mastering the art of walking, and after a year of Taekwondo, she refocused her training on karate, learning

and excelling in that sport under the exceptional coaching of Master Don Gober; and

WHEREAS, Hope extensively trained for six years every Tuesday and Thursday night at the dojo before returning home to practice for several more hours each night, and as she perfected each punch, jab, kick and rotation, she transformed from a grasshopper into a precise, skilled karate expert; and

WHEREAS, eleven-year-old Hope became the youngest person, male or female, to ever receive the elite First Degree Black Belt, an accomplishment that required over 1,300 hours of intense training, patience and discipline in addition to the natural flexibility and capability that she possesses; and

WHEREAS, Hope was named the 2010 Fall State Champion at the Southern Martial Arts Championship (SMAC), the 2012 and 2014 Spring and Fall State Champion at SMAC, the 2013 Mississippi Karate Association (MKA) State Champion in KATA and Sparring, the 2014 MKA State Champion in Weapons and Sparring, the 2014 Grand Champion at the Battle of Mobile in Alabama and the 2015 Gold Medal Winner in KATA and Weapons at the State Games of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, while Hope finished in the top five in three different events at the State Games of America, she considers her most notable accomplishment to be the honor she received when she was invited to speak at the International Karate and Kick Ball

Hall of Fame and introduce Marcellius Gunn, a Memphian who offers free karate classes to inner-city children; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gunn inspires Hope daily to work extremely hard to reach her goals and to use her gifts to help the less fortunate, so on the one night a week she gets a break from training, she still goes to the dojo and helps the lower rank students learn the karate basics; and

WHEREAS, when most eight-year-old children are learning their multiplication tables and going to the local park to play after school, Hope was establishing a fundraiser called "Kick Out Cancer" to raise funds for the Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children in Jackson, Mississippi, ultimately raising over $12,500.00 to help children battle the atrocious disease; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to recognize and commend outstanding young Mississippi athletes such as Hope Berry, who has exceeded all expectations of greatness and brought honor to the great Magnolia State:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate Hope Berry for being named the 2015 State Games of Mississippi "Female Athlete of the Year" and express our best wishes for continued success in all of her athletic and future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to Hope Berry and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 3, 2016

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
March 10, 2016

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE