

Chapter No. 2195

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***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 527***

Originated in Senate

Liz Welch

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 527

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE PASSING OF MISSISSIPPI BLUES-GOSPEL-SOUL ARTIST OTIS CLAY OF BOLIVAR COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXTENDING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE TO HIS BEREAVED FAMILY.

WHEREAS, on January 10, 2016, Bolivar County, Mississippi, lost a native son, Otis Clay. Otis was born in Waxhaw, Mississippi, near Gunnison, and found his way to Chicago but he never forgot his roots. Otis is best known for his gospel music hits like "When The Gates Swing Open" and "I Keep On Toiling." Otis, like many others, was successful in his crossover with R&B; and

WHEREAS, Mississippi-born Otis Clay ventured into the music world with gospel vocal groups before branching out to secular music in the mid-sixties. After signing with Chicago label One-derful! Records, Clay nabbed R&B hits with 1967's "That's How It Is (When You're In Love)" and "A Lasting Love." Following a move to Atlantic Records' Cauldron subsidiary, Clay recorded a

version of the Sir Douglas Quintet's "She's About a Mover" at Muscle Shoals, Alabama's FAME Studios; and

WHEREAS, Clay next teamed with Al Green Producer Willie Mitchell at Memphis-based Hi Records in 1971, resulting in Clay's biggest hit, "Trying to Live My Life Without You"; nearly a decade later, Bob Seger would climb the Hot 100 with his own version of the single. Similarly, Clay's 1980 single "The Only Way Is Up" would be the inspiration for Yazz's U.K. chart-topping cover in 1988; and

WHEREAS, his life has always been a combination of music styles, Clay told the *Chicago Tribune* in 2013: Grand Ole Opry, Sonny Boy Williamson, Vaughn Monroe, Rosemary Clooney, Hank Williams and Roy Acuff; and

WHEREAS, Clay continued to record and perform live in the ensuing decades, including contributing a cover of "Wild Horses" to the Rolling Stones Tribute Compilation "Paint it Blue" in 1997 and scoring a 2008 Grammy nomination in the Best Traditional R&B Vocal Performance category for "Walk a Mile in My Shoes." In 2014, Clay appeared in the Memphis-centric music documentary *Take Me to the River*. Clay was a 2013 inductee into the Blues Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, like so many of his contemporaries, Clay's intense vocal style reflects a gospel background. He made the secular jump in 1965, signing with Chicago's One-derful! Records and issuing a series of gospel-tinged soul records that were a lot

grittier than the customary Windy City soul sound. Clay inaugurated Atlantic's Cotillion subsidiary in 1968 with a supercharged cover of the Sir Douglas Quintet's "She's About a Mover," produced by Rick Hall in Muscle Shoals before the singer joined forces with Hi Records' boss Willie Mitchell. With the relentlessly driving Hi Rhythm Section in tow, Clay waxed his biggest seller in 1972, "Trying to Live My Life Without You," later covered very successfully by Bob Seger; and

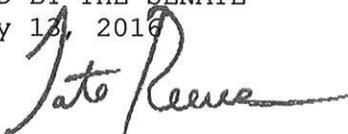
WHEREAS, in 2015, Otis came home several times, attending the Waxhaw Annual Homecoming, performing at B.B. King's funeral, Gunnison Annual Homecoming Festival and a benefit concert with Bobby Rush for Bolivar County Sheriff Kelvin Williams; and

WHEREAS, his surviving family includes children: Carl Wiley, Rhonda Tankson, Tony Clay, Sheldon Clay, Chrissena Clay, Hope Clay, Tamaira Clay, Mark Clay and Tawanna Clay; and we join the Mississippi blues family in expressing our love and condolences to his family and friends and fans of Mississippi blues and gospel around the world:

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 Mississippi Blues-Gospel-Soul artist Otis Clay of Bolivar County, Mississippi, and extend the sympathy of the Legislature to his bereaved family.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the surviving family of Otis Clay, forwarded to the Mississippi Arts Commission, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
January 13, 2016



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 13, 2016



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES