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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 39

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 39

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE HONORABLE SENATOR ALICE RAE VARNADO HARDEN, AND EXTENDING DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS UPON HER PASSING.

WHEREAS, "To everything there is a season, and time to every purpose under the heaven," and as such, the grand architect of the universe, the immaculate author and finisher of our soul's destiny, has summoned the mortal presence of dearly beloved, the Honorable Senator Alice Rae Varnado Harden, to eternal rest, as she has made life's final transition from earthly travailing to heavenly reward, rendering great sorrow and loss to her family, colleagues and friends; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Legislature and the State of Mississippi lost a wonderful friend, colleague, advocate for education, community leader and enlightened lawmaker on Thursday, December 6, 2012, with the untimely demise of Senator Harden, who was a legendary forerunner in Mississippi history as the first

African-American female elected to serve in the Mississippi State Senate; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Jackson State University, where she earned a bachelor of science and master of science degree in education, Senator Harden served 14 years as a classroom teacher and educator, three years of which she served as President of the Mississippi Association of Educators before becoming a member of the Mississippi Senate in 1988; and

WHEREAS, a God-fearing Christian before all other roles she assumed, a devoted wife and nurturing mother next, and always the peoples' advocate, Senator Harden, the living embodiment of a woman of Proverbs 31:10 distinction and possessing the ambitious spirit akin to that of King David, she was a woman after God's own heart, using the benefit of her elected office not to be served, but to be of service to the underprivileged and those without a voice, as most notably evidenced through her championing causes for better educational opportunities for the children of the state and a civil rights pioneer; and

WHEREAS, as fate would lend itself to the building upon the blueprint divinely designed for the pattern of her life by the Great Deity, Senator Harden's heart was pierced by the love, chivalry and affection of Mr. Dennis Labert Harden, and the duo became bone of one another's bone and flesh of one another's flesh after exchanging the nuptials of holy matrimony; and

WHEREAS, Alice Harden was the first African-American Senator to serve as Chair of the Senate Education Committee and was at the forefront of the passage of teacher education reform legislation, child care reform legislation and the first school district conservatorship program, and during her service on the Appropriations Conference Committees, Senator Harden was instrumental in securing funding for the transition dormitory at Jackson State University; and

WHEREAS, one who relied heavily on her faith, Alice confessed her belief in Christ at an early age, and remained devout in her Christian service and patronage throughout her life, reflecting her passion for God through her commitment to assisting others and her Christ-like care and concern for the building of the kingdom, an allegiance to which she continued to manifest as a member of the Greater St. James Missionary Baptist Church, where she served in numerous capacities, in addition to the fulfillment of expectancies with her various professional, social and civic affiliations, including: lifetime memberships with the Jackson State University National Alumni Association and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Mississippi Federation of Democratic Women, for which she served as president; Chair of the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus; Chair of the Mississippi Advisory Committee to the United States Civil Rights Commission; Chair of the Education Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority;

National Council of Negro Women; Mary Church Terrell Literacy Club, Democratic National Committee Women for Mississippi; and the Steering Committee of Southern Women in Public Service; and

WHEREAS, former Governor William Winter stated, "Her interest was in improving the quality of life in the neighborhood in Jackson where she lived, so that children who came out of those neighborhoods would be better prepared to learn." Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves stated, "As a former teacher, Senator Harden brought her passion for improving Mississippi's schools and universities to the State Senate." Governor Phil Bryant stated, "Senator Alice Harden was a pioneer for civil rights and a staunch supporter of public education." Former Lieutenant Governor Amy Tuck stated, "Senator Harden was not only a colleague in the State Senate, but also a close friend. She always looked out for the best interest of her constituents." Representative Alyce Clarke stated, "When we needed a voice in the Senate, or in the community, we knew Alice would be there"; and

WHEREAS, in the Honorable Senator's transfiguration from mortality to immortality, she now adorns the raiment of a spiritual bride, awaiting the bridegroom's return in holy anticipation of that wondrous event, 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 she has traversed the river of life to reunite with those who answered God's summons to life eternal and now beckon her arrival to the celestial shores of heaven's grandeur, the legacy of Senator Harden's memory, which if put to music, would be a majestic symphonic masterpiece composed by the Holy Trinity, will continue to refresh the hearts and fond memories of her beloved survivors: husband, Dennis L. Harden; son, Sachem; and a host of other relatives, colleagues and friends; and

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 and legacy of public service of the Honorable Senator Alice Rae Varnado Harden of Jackson, Mississippi, and extend deepest sympathy to her family, colleagues and friends upon her passing and convey grateful appreciation for sharing Alice with us and with the State of Mississippi.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be

furnished to the family of Senator Alice Harden and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 6, 2013

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 13, 2013

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE