

Chapter No. 2035  
13/HR40/R2039  
85-1-P

*HOUSE*  
*CONCURRENT RESOLUTION*  
*No. 78*

Originated in House  Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 78

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MERIDIAN'S PERFORMING ARTS LEGEND, JAMES ADAIR "JIMMY" PIGFORD, AND EXPRESSING SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS UPON HIS PASSING.

WHEREAS, on Monday, February 4, 2013, the City of Meridian and the State of Mississippi lost one of its stars, a wonderful friend, world-class theatre director, and true ambassador for this city and state with the loss of James Adair "Jimmy" Pigford; and

WHEREAS, born on September 2, 1932, to J.A. and Matalara Pigford, Jimmy Pigford was educated in the Meridian Public School System and graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1956 before traveling to Hollywood, California, with a friend who was interested in getting a screen test; and

WHEREAS, when meeting Jimmy, they asked him to give a screen test also, and he was accepted, beginning a notable stage and screen career including appearances in 30 television shows including "The Millionaire," "Burns and Allen," "Father Knows Best" and "West Point Story," and including movie performances in

"The Rebel," "Tea and Sympathy" and "Shake, Rattle and Rock"; and

WHEREAS, during this time, he was selected to represent the State of Mississippi and the United States of America at the World's Fair in Brussels, Belgium, in 1958, which he credited as one of the highlights of his life; and

WHEREAS, returning to Meridian due to his mother's failing health, Jimmy retained a role at the Meridian Little Theatre in 1960 where he worked as a volunteer, casting, director, board president, and ultimately was hired as Meridian Little Theatre's full-time resident director in 1965; and

WHEREAS, he directed over 200 plays, and one of his earliest efforts to advance the theatre was his formation of the "First Nighters" patron group, and it was also under his leadership and guidance that the Ladies Guild was organized in 1968; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, Jimmy and Mrs. Roland Kimbrell organized the Youth Division of Meridian Little Theatre, furthering his career-long commitment to young people that also proved the inspiration in 1996 for the inauguration of an annual summer youth workshop for children; and

WHEREAS, he has served as President of the Mississippi Community Theatre Association and, as Chairman of the 1968-1969 Mississippi State Theatre Convention, was named to the Governor's Advisory Panel for the Performing Arts in Mississippi in 1970, was honored with the prestigious Excellence in Arts award from the Meridian Council for the Arts in 1994, received the Daughters of

the American Revolution Award for Community Involvement for outstanding contributions in the world of art and entertainment, and he received the *Meridian Star* award for Man of the Year in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Meridian Little Theatre was honored in 2006 and 2007 by *Mississippi Magazine* polls as the Best Live Theatre in Mississippi, thanks in large measure to the talent and dedication of Jimmy Pigford; and

WHEREAS, one of Jimmy's biggest challenges came with the devastating fire that completely destroyed the 52nd Street Playhouse on December 16, 1972, yet he insisted that Meridian Little Theatre not miss a single production, holding performances in various host auditoriums until a new playhouse was constructed; and

WHEREAS, the new playhouse was completed for the 1976-1977 season with a state-of-the-art 400-seat facility, which bears the distinctive imprint of Director Jimmy Pigford with the naming of the auditorium in his honor; and

WHEREAS, his entire professional life has been dedicated to his love of the theatrical arts, and during Jimmy Pigford's leadership the theatre's season membership grew from 382 to more than 2000, a number still approached even in today's economy; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to commemorate such outstanding Mississippians as Jimmy Pigford, whose life is truly a testament to the maxim that "the footprints we leave

behind are as important as the paths we will follow," and his legacy lives on today through the continued success of Meridian Little Theatre and in the hearts and memories of those who knew and loved him best as well as the countless lives he impacted with his directorial talent, business acumen, genuine concern for bettering his community, and generous and caring spirit:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commemorate the life and legacy of James Adair "Jimmy" Pigford of Meridian, Mississippi, and extend heartfelt sympathy to his family and many friends upon his passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to the family of Mr. Jimmy Pigford and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
March 1, 2013

  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE  
March 15, 2013

  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

