

Chapter No. 2099
13/SS01/R592
MC/SC/BP

SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 545

Originated in Senate *Liz Welch* Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 545

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF FORMER DESOTO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION ERLEND NICHOLS, WHO ADMINISTERED THE SCHOOL DISTRICT DURING A PERIOD OF GROWTH INTO THE HIGHEST STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN MISSISSIPPI.

WHEREAS, former DeSoto County Superintendent of Education Erlend Nichols died Monday, October 22, 2012, at the age of 79. Nichols served as DeSoto County School District's 16th Superintendent of Education from 1992 until 1996; and

WHEREAS, when Erlend Nichols was elected Superintendent of DeSoto County Schools in 1991, the system had about 14,000 students. That was less than half the 32,769 enrollment figure recently reported for the current school year. The growing number that Nichols inherited was the harbinger of things to come for the system that today ranks as Mississippi's largest. Those who knew him stated that Nichols was the right man at the right time to lead the system into a period of tremendous growth; and

WHEREAS, "He was the person who was needed," Milton Nichols, a former Olive Branch Mayor and current school board member, said

of his first cousin. "Erlend was a visionary," DeSoto County Superintendent of Education Milton Kuykendall said after learning of his death. "Schools were overcrowded when he became Superintendent. He ran a successful bond issue in November 1993, and built Olive Branch High School, Southaven Middle School, Hernando Middle School, and Horn Lake Middle School. With the rapid growth our district was experiencing, he took our school district to a new level. He was an excellent money manager, and had a farm and business background. Mr. Nichols had a way of making people feel good about themselves, and was a true leader," Dr. Edith Robinson, former Deputy Superintendent, stated. "He understood the importance of giving every child an opportunity to be successful. Erlend played an important role in the development of DeSoto County Schools." Longtime Coach and former Principal Theron Long, now a school board member, also remembered Nichols, "He was one of the greatest men I have ever known"; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Nichols came from a family filled with educators and had 40 years of education experience. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree from then Memphis State University, Mr. Nichols began teaching at Olive Branch High School in 1954 and later served as Assistant Superintendent in charge of transportation, Principal of Olive Branch High School and the district's Assistant Superintendent for Business. Albert Broadway preceded Mr. Nichols as Superintendent and said they knew one another before their professional relationship as educators.

Broadway said that during his 16-year tenure as Superintendent, Mr. Nichols served as his Financial Manager and Assistant Superintendent; and

WHEREAS, after leaving the Superintendent's office, Mr. Nichols was involved in other efforts in his home DeSoto County community. He was spokesman for a citizens group that planned to renovate the county courthouse in Hernando as administrative office space and construct a new building to house judicial courts and services; and

WHEREAS, Nichols is survived by his wife, Patricia Williams Nichols; two sons, Mark and Jay; four grandchildren and one step-grandchild; brother Clinton; and three sisters: Juanita Looney, Louise Marr and Melba Doddridge; and

WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this respected school administrator who leaves a legacy of leadership and dedication to all in his community and state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend the life and public service of former DeSoto County Superintendent of Education Erlend Nichols who administered the county school district during a period of growth into the highest student enrollment in the State of Mississippi, and extend our sympathy to his surviving family on his passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the surviving family of Mr. Nichols, forwarded to the DeSoto

County Board of Education and made available to the Capitol Press
Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 8, 2013



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 22, 2013



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES