Chapter No. 2055
19/HR43/R2190
EW / CB

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 90

Originated in House _____ Clerk

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 90

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE ATHLETICISM AND NFL CAREER SUCCESS OF WALTER PAYTON AND RECOGNIZING HIM AS ONE OF THE LEGENDARY FOOTBALL PLAYERS OF JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE'S HALL OF FAME.

WHEREAS, one of three children born to Peter and Alyne Payton in Columbia, Mississippi, Walter Payton, who initially declined playing football at John J. Jefferson High School due in part to his already packed schedule of extracurricular activities, and the remainder to avoid competing with his older football playing brother, Eddie, would become one of the greatest football players to grace the gridiron, as a household name that would boast a statistical record that dreams and legends are made of; and

WHEREAS, once the decision was made to play high school varsity football during his junior year, Payton's success was instant, even as a small running back who only stood 5-feet 10-inches tall, his speed, strength and agility, made him a reckoning force of contention and a formidable, almost unstoppable adversary on the field; and

WHEREAS, despite not receiving any invitations from Southeastern Conference Colleges, even after establishing himself as one of Mississippi's best running back prospects at the time, Payton, after initially committing to Kansas State University, opted instead to remain close to home and pursue his collegiate career at Jackson State University, joining the Tigers' starting lineup during his freshman year in the fall of 1971, followed by a breakout performance on October 1, 1972, during his sophomore year, when he set a then-best SWAC single-game scoring record by rushing for seven touchdowns and two 2-point conversions for 46 points and a school record of 279 rushing yards in JSU's 72-0 domineering win over Lane College; and

WHEREAS, selected for the All-American team and named Black College Player of the Year in 1973 and 1974, Payton, in his four years at Jackson State University, rushed for more than 3,500 yards and scored more than 450 points in a pure exhibition of demonstrating to fans and opponents alike, the unadulterated talent and versatility he possessed as a player; and

WHEREAS, the first-round choice and the fourth player selected in the 1975 National Football League Draft by the Chicago Bears, Walter Payton, standing 5'10" and topping the scale at 200 pounds as a speeding locomotive, developed into a superstar of unusual dimensions during his 13-season NFL tenure from 1975 to 1987 with the Bears, where he dominated the rushing section of the league's record books during and long after his career ended; and

WHEREAS, at the time of his retirement in 1987, Payton's statistical record included: 16,726 total yards; 10 seasons with 1,000 or more rushing yards, including the single game 275 total yards against Minnesota in 1977; 77 games with more than 100 yards rushing; 110 rushing touchdowns; 4,368 combined net attempts and accounted for 21,803 combined net yards; and an impressive 750 points on 125 touchdowns; and

WHEREAS, extremely durable, Payton, who missed only one game during his rookie campaign, subsequent to that one-game absence, returned to play 186 consecutive games, which allowed him to showcase his gifts during pre-, regular- and post-season play, and enabled him to: win the National Football Conference's (NFC) rushing title for five consecutive years from 1976 to 1980; lead the NFC with 96 points in 1977; win the NFL kickoff return championship his rookie year in 1975; be named All-Pro and All-NFC seven times; make nine Pro Bowl Game appearances; be twice-named NFL's Most Valuable Player and twice-named Offensive Player of the Year in 1977 and 1985; be named NFC Most Valuable Player in 1977; and

WHEREAS, eager to improve his performance from year to year, Payton's efforts annually propelled the Bears into playoff contention, which resulted in his ability to experience the pinnacle apex of his storied career with national championship status when the Chicago Bears triumphed over the New England Patriots in the Super Bowl XX in January 1986; and

WHEREAS, subsequent to his retirement in 1987, Walter Payton explored various business opportunities in several fields, from real estate, to restaurants, to race cars, but most important to his heart were his philanthropic and humanitarian endeavors to make life better for others, primarily through his efforts with the Walter Payton Foundation; and

WHEREAS, the creator of the signature "shutter-step" maneuver, a high-stepping irregularly paced run developed to distract his pursuers during long runs, Payton, who adopted the motto - "Never Die Easy," fit the bill of his life as a versatile athlete who earned numerous accolades for his primary running back positions, and also for his exploits as a blocker, receiver, emergency punter and quarterback, and were easy character traits that fervently supported the decision for his enshrinement into the 1993 Pro Football Hall of Fame, the 1993 Class of the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame, the 1996 College Football Hall of Fame, the Jackson State University Sports Hall of Fame, and the Black College Football Hall of Fame in 2010; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to recognize and pay homage to the stellar athletic feats of sports' legends of Walter Payton's caliber, who are few and far between, and whose natural disposition was that of a gentle giant, executing dominance on the gridiron while being perfectly balanced with a gentle humility and generous heart of benevolence:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend the athleticism and NFL career success of Walter Payton and recognize him as one of the legendary football players of Jackson State University to be inducted into the National Football League's Hall of Fame.

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

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 20, 2019.

Philip Gunn

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
March 25, 2019

Tate Reeves

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE