SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.  535

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND PROCLAIMING NEW STAGE THEATRE, MISSISSIPPI'S ONLY RESIDENT PROFESSIONAL THEATRE, AS "THE STATE THEATRE OF MISSISSIPPI."

WHEREAS, since 1965, New Stage Theatre has set the standard for theatre in the State of Mississippi. As Mississippi's only resident professional theatre, New Stage has become one of the state's foremost cultural resources, giving professional theatre artists from the state a reason to stay in Mississippi and bringing the best of theatrical talent from around the country into our state to perform for local audiences; and

WHEREAS, throughout New Stage's history, the best in dramatic, comic, musical and family entertainment has graced the theatre's stages, New Stage has brought world premieres of new works by developing as well as established artists, works by renowned Mississippi writers such as Eudora Welty (who is a member of the New Stage board), Tennessee Williams and Beth Henley are presented along with the classics of theatre history, the best of American and contemporary drama, and new works by the rising stars of tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, New Stage Theatre is Mississippi's only resident professional theatre and operates in association with Actors' Equity Association, the national union for professional actors and stage managers. Programs are funded by grants and by corporate and individual contributors, as well as, by season and individual ticket sales; the mainstage season includes six shows and two children's shows; in the Hewes Room, an active Late Night at New Stage is presented in addition to youth and adult acting classes.
During the 1997-1998 season, over 40,000 Mississippians attended in-house productions at New Stage Theatre on the main stage and in the Hewes Room; and

WHEREAS, New Stage's presence and positive influence is felt throughout the state -- not only in our work in Jackson but in our extensive educational program and touring outreaches. Each year, the New Stage Arts in Education company of touring actors performs plays and conducts workshops for thousands of young people from all age groups at schools, churches, theatres and auditoriums from Gulfport to Memphis and from Vicksburg to Columbus; thousands of Mississippians get their first exposure to live theatre from New Stage productions in the capitol city and around the state and New Stage, in turn, has historically been supportive of the numerous other educational and community theatre undertakings throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, New Stage Theatre continues to set the standard for high quality professional theatre entertainment in Mississippi. With a dynamic and forward-looking vision to carry the theatre into the 21st Century, New Stage will continue to be one of Mississippi's most outstanding and nationally recognized cultural resources:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize and proclaim New Stage Theatre, Mississippi's only resident professional theatre, as "The State Theatre of Mississippi," and commend Artistic Director John Maxwell and the theatre staff for its educational and community theatre undertakings throughout the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Artistic Director John Maxwell and be made available to members of the Capitol Press Corps.