SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 608

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE FRIENDS OF WILLIE MORRIS ORGANIZATION FOR HONORING THE WORK OF THIS FAMOUS MISSISSIPPIAN AND DECLARING MAY 12, 2001, AS "WILLIE MORRIS DAY."

WHEREAS, William Weaks Morris was born in 1934 in Jackson, Mississippi, but when he was six months old his parents moved to Yazoo City, a small town located, as he writes in North Toward Home, "on the edge of the Delta, straddling that memorable divide where the hills end and the flat land begins"; and

WHEREAS, Willie Morris died August 2, 1999, having nearly finished his latest work, a project with his son about his home state's rich history and future; and

WHEREAS, to carry on the work Willie began, uniting established writers with aspiring writers, and under the auspices of the Yazoo Arts and Cultural Alliance and the Mississippi Humanities Council, a cadre of friends and supporters has been established called the "Friends of Willie Morris," who this year are hosting a special event on May 12, 2001, to be held in Yazoo City, Mississippi, called "Remembering Willie: A Yazoo Celebration" which will bring together many of Willie Morris' boyhood friends, his literary colleagues and his admirers, as well as others touched by his generous heart and evocative prose; and

WHEREAS, the program participants for this inaugural event are as follows: William Dunlap, artist, Washington, D.C.; David Halbertstam, author, New York City; Rick Bragg, author and New York Times feature writer, New Orleans; Will Campbell, humorist; Ed Yoder, author; Curtis Wilkie, journalist and author, New Orleans; Larry L. King, author, Washington, D.C.; Jack Bales,
biographer and research librarian, Mary Washington College; Ruth Tuttle Williams, author, Jackson, Mississippi; John Horhn, Mississippi State Senator; Melanie Musgrove, Mississippi's First Lady; Rick Cleveland, author and sports columnist, The Clarion-Ledger, Jackson, Mississippi; Jerry Ward, poet and Professor of English, Tougaloo College; Rod Barnes, Head Basketball Coach, University of Mississippi; Ellen Douglas, author, Jackson, Mississippi; Jill Conner Browne, author, Jackson, Mississippi; Bobby DeLaughter, author and Judge, Jackson, Mississippi; Mike Espy, attorney, former Congressman and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; David Sansing, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Mississippi; Wardell Leach, Mayor of Yazoo City; and childhood friends of Willie Morris; and

WHEREAS, Willie Morris attained national prominence in his career as a journalist, nonfiction writer, novelist, editor and essayist, and is particularly well known for the books and articles in which he compares his experiences and his long and complex southern heritage to America's own history, and it is with great pride that we announce this Mississippi event which celebrates the legacy of one of Mississippi's most famous authors, and recognize the contributions of friends and volunteers which make an event like this possible:

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 Friends of Willie Morris organization and all other involved support groups for hosting this inaugural special event honoring the life of Mississippi writer Willie Morris, and declare May 12, 2001, to be "Willie Morris Day" in Mississippi, and commend this event to all participants and encourage these dedicated volunteers to make this an annual event honoring Mississippi's rich literary culture.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Willie Morris, the Mayor of Yazoo City,
Mississippi, the Friends of Willie Morris organization and the Mississippi Humanities Council and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.