SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 67

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY'S "LEST WE FORGET" ACTIVITIES WEEK MEMORIALIZING THE TRAGIC DEATHS OF PHILLIP GIBBS AND JAMES GREEN.

WHEREAS, Jackson State University was founded as Natchez Seminary in 1877 by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. The school was established in Natchez, Mississippi "for the moral, religious and intellectual improvement of Christian leaders of the colored people of Mississippi and the neighboring states." In November 1882 the school was moved to Jackson, Mississippi; in March 1899 the curriculum was expanded and the name was changed to Jackson College; and

WHEREAS, Jackson State University has a distinguished history, rich in the tradition of educating young men and women for leadership, having undergone seven name changes as it grew and developed; and

WHEREAS, in the Spring of 1970, campus communities across this country were characterized by a chorus of protests and demonstrations. The issues were the escalation of the war in Vietnam and the United States' invasion of Cambodia; the ecology; racism and repression; and the inclusion of the experiences of women and minorities in the educational system. No institution of higher education was left untouched by confrontations and continuous calls for change; and

WHEREAS, at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi, there was the added issue of intimidation and harassment by motorists traveling Lynch Street, a major thoroughfare that divided the campus and linked West Jackson to downtown; and
WHEREAS, on May 14-15, 1970, Jackson State University students were protesting these and other issues, as well as the tragedy that occurred at Kent State University in Ohio, when seventy-five city police officers and state troopers opened fire on students and other citizens gathered in front of Alexander Hall, a women’s dormitory on the campus, killing Phillip Gibbs, a 21-year-old Ripley, Mississippi, pre-law major, and James Earl Green, a Senior at Jim Hill High School who was taking a short cut home from his after-school job; and

WHEREAS, following the investigation of the incident by federal authorities, J.R. Lynch Street, which at the time bisected the campus, was closed to through traffic. The Gibbs-Green Plaza, or Plaza for short, was erected shortly thereafter and named for Phillip Lafayette Gibbs and James Earl Green; and

WHEREAS, a popular good-weather hangout for the student body, the Plaza is a large, multilevel brick and concrete patio-like structure that blocks off J.R. Lynch Street and links Alexander Hall to the University Green. The Plaza is the site of many outdoor dances, concerts, Greek shows and other events throughout the year. It is especially active during homecoming, when the homecoming festival and other events are held on its various levels; and

WHEREAS, Jackson State University will honor the memory of Phillip Gibbs and James E. Green with a week of activities. On April 21-28, 2002, Jackson State University will host various activities to memorialize the names of Gibbs and Green. The theme "Lest We Forget" will be quite appropriate. In an effort to turn these tragedies to something special and meaningful, activities will include a Sunday Vesper Service and two Panel Guest Discussions by alumni and administrators who were witnesses to the events. Additionally, a student unity summit will include various Mississippi colleges and university students to discuss unity and diversity. The week-long event will end with a candlelight march...
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby recognize Jackson State University's "Lest We Forget" Activities Week in memory of the tragic deaths of students Phillip Gibbs and James Green, and commend the university for reminding its students of their legacy to the people of the State of Mississippi.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be presented to the President of Jackson State University, forwarded to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.