

By: Representatives Ford, Brown

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 43

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE ROBERT GEORGE
2 CLARK, JR., FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF OUTSTANDING AND DEDICATED
3 SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI AND
4 CONGRATULATING HIM UPON HIS RETIREMENT.

5 WHEREAS, Robert George Clark, Jr., Speaker Pro Tempore of the
6 Mississippi House of Representatives, is completing his ninth
7 consecutive term as a member of the Mississippi House of
8 Representatives from District 47, which includes Attala, Holmes
9 and Yazoo Counties; and

10 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark, a native of Holmes
11 County, Mississippi, was born on October 3, 1928, in Ebenezer,
12 Mississippi, later earning an undergraduate degree from Jackson
13 State University and a master's degree in administration and
14 educational services from Michigan State University, in addition
15 to studies at Mississippi Valley State University, Florida A & M
16 University, Western Michigan University and as a 1979 teaching
17 fellow of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard
18 University; and

19 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark began his journey of
20 contribution to Mississippi by becoming a teacher, coach and
21 principal in our state's school system where he fell in love with
22 Mississippi's future--its children, setting aside his initial
23 ambition to become an attorney; and

24 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark also dreamed of becoming a
25 missionary in Africa, but when calls to that vocation were
26 presented to him, he decided that there was more than enough
27 "missionary" work to do for the children of Mississippi; and



28 WHEREAS, during his teaching and coaching career, Speaker Pro
29 Tempore Clark instilled in his students the values of courage and
30 knowledge, challenging them to learn and to play sports with the
31 same principles that they should live by; and

32 WHEREAS, recognizing that the parents of his students could
33 better contribute to the education of their children if they could
34 assist their children with their schoolwork, in 1966, Speaker Pro
35 Tempore Clark sought to create an adult education program in the
36 school district in which he was teaching; and

37 WHEREAS, his entry into the political arena began when the
38 local school board denied his request to start the adult education
39 program, and in disapproving his request, the board promised that
40 if the local superintendent of education would approve of such a
41 program, the board would endorse it, whereupon Speaker Pro Tempore
42 Clark announced his candidacy for the office of superintendent;
43 and

44 WHEREAS, before the next election for superintendent, the
45 Mississippi Legislature enacted a law changing the
46 superintendent's position from elected to appointed, prompting
47 Speaker Pro Tempore Clark's decision to run for the Mississippi
48 House of Representatives; and

49 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark was elected to the
50 Mississippi House of Representatives and began his service as a
51 member of the House in 1968, becoming the first African American
52 elected to the Mississippi Legislature since Reconstruction and
53 since that time, he has become known as a fair and honest leader;
54 and

55 WHEREAS, over the years since his election to the House,
56 Speaker Pro Tempore Clark has gained his stature as a statesman,
57 rising from freshman lawmaker to House Education Committee
58 Chairman and culminating in his 1992 election by his colleagues to
59 the Office of Speaker Pro Tempore, the leadership post second only
60 to the Speaker of the House; and



61 WHEREAS, as Chairman of the Education Committee, Speaker Pro
62 Tempore Clark led the House to pass many important education acts,
63 most notably the 1982 Education Reform Act, the 1984 Vocational
64 Education Reform Act and the recent Education Enhancement Act; and

65 WHEREAS, as Speaker Pro Tempore, he serves as Chairman of the
66 House Management Committee, which oversees the vital internal
67 business and personnel affairs of the House, and he is the
68 patriarch of the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus; and

69 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark was one of the founding
70 members of Central Mississippi, Inc., an antipoverty program in
71 Central Mississippi, which has been instrumental in preparing
72 rural children to enter the mainstream public schools; helped
73 organize the Milton Olive III Memorial Corporation of Holmes
74 County, an antipoverty program designed to provide essential
75 medical care to individuals; served as Director of Project Second
76 Start at Saints Junior College, an organization that focused on
77 giving adults an opportunity to develop vocational skills; and
78 organized the Fine Housing Enterprise Program which allowed
79 numerous poor families in the county to afford decent housing; and

80 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark has received numerous
81 awards and honors during his career, including the Alumnus of the
82 Year Award from Jackson State University, the Award of Distinction
83 and Outstanding Leadership Award from the University of
84 Mississippi and the Outstanding Achievement Award for Education in
85 Mississippi; and

86 WHEREAS, currently, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark is involved
87 with Holmes County 21st Century Commission, an organization which
88 he organized for the purpose of preparing county residents for the
89 21st century through education, skill development and examples of
90 successful work ethic; and

91 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark is the subject of a new
92 book, Robert G. Clark's Journey to the House: A Black
93 Politician's Story, by Will D. Campbell, which reflects on Clark's



94 political career and his contributions to contemporary politics
95 and culture in our state; and

96 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark has been praised by many
97 for his vision and constructive leadership, called a "true
98 champion" by Speaker Tim Ford who also notes that Speaker Pro
99 Tempore Clark "...has always been the type...to sit down and work
100 things out and he's been...a tremendous asset...."; and

101 WHEREAS, in addition to his career as an educator and
102 statesman, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark has been a businessman and
103 rancher, a faithful member of the Baptist Church and the Elks, and
104 all during his life he has been a dedicated family man, raising
105 his two sons by his deceased wife, Essie, on his own before his
106 union with his lovely and gracious wife, the former Jo Ann Ross,
107 who has lovingly supported him and their children, LaLeche, Robert
108 George III and Bryant Wandrick, in all their endeavors; and

109 WHEREAS, Speaker Pro Tempore Clark has indicated that he will
110 retire at the expiration of his present term, and the members of
111 this House wish to express sincere appreciation to Mr. Speaker Pro
112 Tempore for his dedicated service to the people of the State of
113 Mississippi and the personal sacrifices that he has made on their
114 behalf:

115 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
116 REPRESENTATIVES, That we do hereby commend our friend, colleague
117 and leader, Robert George Clark, Jr., for all that he has meant to
118 the Mississippi House of Representatives and for his unmatched
119 contributions to the people of the State of Mississippi.

120 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
121 furnished to Speaker Pro Tempore Robert George Clark, Jr., and to
122 the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

