SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 555

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING FORMER MISSISSIPPI GOVERNOR WILLIAM WINTER ON HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY AND COMMENDING HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE.

WHEREAS, probably no one Southern politician has given more of his life to the cause of race relations than former Governor William Forrest Winter; and

WHEREAS, a February 20, 2003, symposium "The Future of Race in America," and a reception will mark the public celebration of Governor Winter's 80th birthday; and

WHEREAS, these public events at the Old Capitol in Jackson are hosted by the University of Mississippi and its Institute for Racial Reconciliation, and will feature presentations by panelists prominent in history, journalism and politics; and

WHEREAS, William Winter, an Ole Miss alumnus in private law practice in Jackson, was the State's Chief Executive from 1980 to 1984. Passage of the groundbreaking Education Reform Act of 1982 (which is now 20 years old) is widely recognized as one of his administration's most significant achievements, but his long-held belief in racial equity has been a leading factor in accomplishments throughout his personal and public life; and

WHEREAS, William Winter's career of public service began as a University of Mississippi law student when he succeeded his father in the House of Representatives. As State Tax Collector, he successfully pushed legislation to have the office abolished. He also distinguished himself as State Treasurer and Lieutenant Governor. But his best known legacy came when as Governor he called the Legislature into Extraordinary Session in the newly
renovated New Capitol Building to consider and pass the nation's first truly comprehensive education reform act, which among other things established Mississippi's first public kindergarten for all children; and

WHEREAS, the achievements of his governorship (1980-1984) were a result of his integrity, his strength of character, his courage and his unique ability to bring together highly energetic people and convince them to work and accomplish his goals and his vision for Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, since stepping down from public office, Winter has continued to work for the public good throughout his home state, the region and the country. He has received national recognition for his promotion of public education and racial reconciliation. He received the 2001 Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Award from the National Education Association. A contributing author on three books, he has taught at Harvard, Millsaps College, the University of Mississippi Law School and Mississippi Valley State. He has chaired numerous boards, including the Commission on the Future of the South and the National Civic League. He has been on the State Archives and History board since 1957, and the agency's new building in downtown Jackson bears his name. In 1992, President Clinton tapped Winter to lead a national initiative on racial reconciliation, and in 2002 he received the Mid South Foundation Leadership Award; and

WHEREAS, Nobel Laureate and former President Jimmy Carter recently termed Winter "the father of education reform in the South...a beacon of hope to a generation of Mississippians during a period of radical changes," and United States Senator Thad Cochran hailed Winter as "one of the finest citizens our state has ever produced"; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize this quintessential statesman who has brought honor to the State of Mississippi:
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby congratulate our friend, former Governor William Forrest Winter, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, extend to him the greetings and best wishes of the Legislature, and commend him for his legacy of unselfish and generous contributions to the betterment of our state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Governor Winter and his family in the Senate chamber where he once presided, be forwarded to the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.