

By: Senator(s) Little, Gordon, Gollott,
Walden, Chaney, Dawkins

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 559

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THOMAS
2 HAL PHILLIPS, MISSISSIPPI WRITER AND FORMER PUBLIC SERVICE
3 COMMISSIONER FROM KOSSUTH, MISSISSIPPI, UPON THE OCCASION OF THE
4 RELEASE OF HIS LATEST NOVEL "RED MIDNIGHT".

5 WHEREAS, Kossuth, Mississippi, native and veteran Hollywood
6 screenwriter Hal Phillips has recently released "Red Midnight",
7 his first novel in 40 years; and

8 WHEREAS, "Red Midnight" (University Press of Mississippi) is
9 the depression era story of young Marcus Oday, a young boy who has
10 lost his mother, set in mythical Hammerhead in North Mississippi,
11 with a side trip and lengthy stay at Olanberg (Parchman) State
12 Penitentiary in the Mississippi Delta; and

13 WHEREAS, Thomas Hal Phillips was in the last wave of the
14 Southern Literary Renaissance; he was born on October 11, 1922, on
15 an old farm near Corinth, Mississippi, to W.T. Phillips and Ollie
16 Fare Phillips. He was one of six children and attended Alcorn
17 Agricultural High School, where he wrote for the school paper,
18 played football and argued for the debate team. After his
19 graduation from high school, he went to Mississippi State,
20 graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1943 and served
21 with the United States Navy as a Lieutenant, Junior Grade, during
22 World War II. After leaving the military, he studied creative
23 writing at the University of Alabama, receiving a Master's of Arts
24 Degree in 1948; and

25 WHEREAS, while at the University of Alabama, Thomas Hal
26 Phillips wrote *The Bitterweed Path* as his thesis for his Master's
27 Degree; published in 1950, this book has been successful and is
28 considered to be very well written. His next book, *The Golden*



29 *Lie*, was published in 1951. In 1952, *Search for a Hero* was
30 published and won critical acclaim. His next book, *Kangaroo*
31 *Hollow*, was first published in England in 1954 and in 2002 was
32 published in America. In 1955, *The Loved and the Unloved* was
33 published and also has been reprinted just recently in this
34 country; and

35 WHEREAS, from 1948 until 1950, Phillips taught creative
36 writing at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. After
37 publishing his five books, he became the Public Service
38 Commissioner of the Northern District of Mississippi, following
39 his brother in the position. He served in this position until he
40 resigned to manage his brother Rubel Lex Phillip's campaign bid
41 for Governor of Mississippi; and

42 WHEREAS, since the 1960's, Thomas Hal Phillips has worked on
43 numerous screenplays, primarily as a writer but also in nonwriter
44 positions. Among the films that he has worked on are: *Roll of*
45 *Thunder, Hear My Cry, Tarzan's Fight for Life, Huckleberry Finn,*
46 *Minstrel Man, The Brain Machine, Nightmare in Badham County,*
47 *Walking Tall II, Buffalo Bill* and *Ode to Billy Joe*. He also
48 worked on the Emmy Award-winning "*Autobiography of Miss Jane*
49 *Pittman*." Furthermore, he has been associated with Robert Altma's
50 *Thieves Like Us, California Split, and Nashville*, for which he
51 created and then played the part of a presidential candidate named
52 Hal Phillip Walker, whose voice is heard but whose face is never
53 seen on screen. Several of Thomas Hal Phillips' short stories
54 received critical notice: the short story "Mostly in the Fields"
55 became part of his book, *Search for a Hero*; "A Touch of Earth,"
56 *Foley's Best American Short Stories of 1949*; "The Shadow of an
57 Arm" was one of the O. Henry Prize Stories of 1951; and "Long
58 Bridge" was published. From 1947 to 1953 Phillips received
59 several grants including the Julius Rosenwal Fellowship in
60 fiction, the Eugend F. Saxton Award, the Fulbright Fellowship; and
61 two Guggenheim Fellowships; and



62 WHEREAS, today Thomas Hal Phillips, who just celebrated his
63 80th birthday, still lives in Corinth, Mississippi, and it is with
64 great pride that we recognize the literary accomplishments of this
65 respected Mississippi writer who has brought joy to his readers
66 and honor to his community and to the State of Mississippi:

67 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
68 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
69 we do hereby commend and congratulate Hal Phillips, Mississippi
70 writer and former Public Service Commissioner from Kossuth,
71 Mississippi, upon the occasion of the release of his latest novel
72 "*Red Midnight*" and extend to him and his family the best wishes of
73 the Legislature on his future endeavors.

74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
75 Hal Phillips and be made available to the Tupelo Daily Journal and
76 the Capitol Press Corps.

