

By: Senator(s) Little, Smith

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 566

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THALLIS  
2 LEWIS, DIRECTOR OF THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS PROGRAM OF THE MISSISSIPPI  
3 BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS, UPON HER RECEIPT OF THE 2003 GOVERNOR'S  
4 EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS AWARD IN THE CATEGORY OF LEADERSHIP IN  
5 MISSISSIPPI HERITAGE.

6 WHEREAS, Thallis Lewis, Director of the Cultural Affairs  
7 Program of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, is the  
8 recipient of the 2003 Governor's Excellence in the Arts Award in  
9 the category of Leadership in Mississippi Heritage; and

10 WHEREAS, as a full-blooded Choctaw Indian growing up in the  
11 Bogue Chitto Community, Thallis Lewis saw firsthand how the ties  
12 among the Choctaw people depend on their language, beliefs,  
13 customs and traditions. She worked alongside her father and  
14 mother, listened to the elders' stories and enjoyed dancing to  
15 traditional chants. She also recognized that education offered  
16 her people more choices than field and farm work; and

17 WHEREAS, a member of Choctaw Central High School's very first  
18 graduating class, Thallis went on to earn her Bachelor's Degree  
19 and to serve her tribe as a teacher, administrator and program  
20 director; and

21 WHEREAS, two decades ago she introduced Choctaw dance into  
22 the curriculum of the Early Childhood Education Program. Since  
23 then, she has encouraged dance groups adhering to each Choctaw  
24 Community's particular dance traditions. At the last Choctaw  
25 Indian Fair, more than a dozen dance groups were featured, a  
26 testimony to the success of her efforts; and

27 WHEREAS, under Thallis' guidance, cultural presentations at  
28 the Choctaw Fair have expanded to include basketry, food ways



29 demonstration and hands-on activities for children. She was  
30 instrumental in the development of the cultural section of the  
31 tribal website; worked with educators to develop teaching  
32 materials; and she maintains a full schedule of statewide school  
33 programs; and

34 WHEREAS, currently Thallis directs the Cultural Affairs  
35 Program of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. She developed  
36 a highly successful series of community workshops in traditions  
37 such as clothes making, beadwork and traditional outdoor cookery.  
38 She has initiated research into endangered traditions and  
39 documentation of the recollections of tribal elders; and

40 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the unique  
41 talents of this citizen who has brought honor to her community and  
42 to the State of Mississippi:

43 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
44 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That  
45 we do hereby commend and congratulate Thallis Lewis, Director of  
46 the Cultural Affairs Program of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw  
47 Indians, upon her receipt of the 2003 Governor's Excellence in the  
48 Arts Award in the category of Leadership in Mississippi Heritage,  
49 and wish her and her family success in their future endeavors.

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
51 Thallis Lewis at induction ceremonies on February 28, 2003, and be  
52 made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

