SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 614

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING CHIEF PHILLIP MARTIN OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS FOR HIS LEADERSHIP IN CREATING VERY STRONG AND DIVERSIFIED TRIBALLY-OWNED AND OPERATED BUSINESSES AND ENTERPRISES.

WHEREAS, Phillip Martin is the democratically elected Tribal Chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, a federally-recognized American Indian tribe of 9,100 enrolled members living on or near 30,000 acres of reservation land in East Central Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Martin has a 45-year record of service and leadership in the tribal government, having served with the utmost integrity and dignity as Tribal Chief since 1979. Chief Martin is currently serving his sixth consecutive four-year term. His date of birth is March 13, 1926; and

WHEREAS, Chief Martin serves the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians on numerous Boards of Directors. During his tenure as Tribal Chief, Mr. Martin has established Tribally-owned and operated businesses and service operations, most of which are located on the Choctaw Indian Reservation, and some of which are located in Mexico and in major cities across North America. The result has been the creation of a very strong and widely diversified local economy, with the Tribe now ranking among Mississippi's five largest employers; and

WHEREAS, on July 1, 1994, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians launched its first gaming operation, the Silver Star Hotel and Casino, organized under the authority of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. The largest and most profitable Choctaw Tribal enterprise to date, the Las Vegas-style Silver Star Hotel and...
Casino is located on Tribal land in East Central Mississippi. In August 2002, the ribbon was cut for the Tribe's second casino, the Golden Moon Hotel and Casino, doubling the Tribe's entertainment, gaming, fine dining and hospitality venues. Another part of the rapidly growing Pearl River Resort complex is the Dancing Rabbit Golf Club, a 36-hole, championship golf course designed by Architect Tom Fazio and professional golfer Jerry Pate. The resort and casinos currently employ approximately 4,000 people. The Tribe is bringing Mississippi the state's first Hard Rock Cafe. It will open near Lake Pushmataha at Geyser Falls Water Theme Park in May 2003, along with the Hard Rock Beach Club, and a 300-room Hard Rock Hotel is slated to open at the Pearl River Resort within three years; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as Tribal Chief (uninterrupted since 1979), Phillip Martin has helped to create approximately 9,000 permanent, full-time jobs on the reservation. Martin has been responsible for establishing an 80-acre industrial park, a Tribally-owned construction company, and several public service enterprises, such as the Choctaw Transit Authority, the Choctaw Utility Commission, the Choctaw Water Treatment facility, and the Choctaw Department of Public Works. Mr. Martin also developed Chahta Enterprises, now located in Mexico, which assembles automotive wiring harnesses for the Ford Motor Company, as well as Delphi Packard and Matrix Systems. Other customers have included United Technologies, Eastman Kodak, Sylvania, General Motors and Daimler-Chrysler. Further, Chief Martin began a joint venture with American Greetings, to hand-finish greeting cards for the corporation; this is the first plant built on Tribal land through use of state industrial revenue bonds. Another Tribal enterprise is the First American Printing and Direct Mail, a commercial printing and mail processing business. First American is the largest commercial printer on the Mississippi Gulf Coast; and
WHEREAS, nationally, Mr. Martin has served as President of National Tribal Chairmen's Association, and President of United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc., (USET), an association of 23 federally-recognized Tribes in the eastern portion of the United States, Mr. Martin founded the USET organization in 1969. He was the first President of the Board of Regents of Haskell Indian Junior College, between 1970 and 1976 (now Haskell Indian Nations University). In 1992, Mr. Martin founded the United South and Eastern Tribes Gaming Association. He currently presides over the organization; and

WHEREAS, a strong and well-known advocate for education, Chief Martin serves on the Advisory Committee for the Division of Technology, Mississippi State University, Meridian Branch. He has also established the Choctaw Tribal Scholarships Program to ensure that all Mississippi Choctaw students can attend the colleges and universities of their choice; and

WHEREAS, during recent years, Phillip Martin, as the elected Chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, has been the recipient of several awards. In addition to winning the United Indian Development Association's Jay Silverheels Award, Chief Martin received the Minority Supplier/Distributor of the Year Award from the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Administration, the "Soar Like An Eagle" Achievement Award from the United Indian Youth Organization (UNITY), and the Economic Achievement Award from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, awarded Chief Martin an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree at the school's Spring 2002 commencement ceremonies on May 11, 2002, in his honor and also as a tribute to the Choctaw people of Mississippi and the nearly 9,000 employees who serve the Tribe; and

WHEREAS, through the years Chief Martin has dedicated his service to improving the overall livelihood of all Tribal members
and has garnered phenomenal achievements in economic, educational and community development. Chief Martin's business savvy and leadership skills have propelled the Tribe to the forefront of economic development in the Southeast; and

WHEREAS, the people of Mississippi are extremely proud of Chief Phillip Martin for his 40 years of outstanding public service as an elected official of the Choctaw Tribal government and for his major contribution to the economy of 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 commend Chief Phillip Martin for his many years of tireless devotion to the Choctaw Indian people and for his leadership in creating very strong and diversified tribally-owned and operated businesses and enterprises which enhance the local economy and benefit the entire State of Mississippi.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Chief Phillip Martin and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.