To: Rules

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION 2003

By: Senator(s) Michel, Blackmon, Browning, Burton, Canon, Carmichael, Chaney, Dearing, Farris, Frazier, Furniss, Gordon, Harden, Harvey, Huggins, Hyde-Smith, Jackson, Johnson (19th), Jordan, King, Kirby, Little, Mettetal, Nunnelee, Ross, Simmons, Smith, Stogner, White

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 94

WHEREAS, remembered as a thinker who sought to help the city he loved, Jackson business leader and philanthropist, Stuart C. Irby, Jr., passed away on Friday, February 21, 2003; and

WHEREAS, the former Chairman and President of Irby Construction Company and Stuart C. Irby Company, an electrical supply company that literally provided power transmission lines to every corner of the globe, Stuart Irby used his talents to benefit others; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, Governor Fordice appointed him as the first Chairman of the Mississippi Gaming Commission, representing financially independent businessmen, and Stuart took a personal interest in ensuring that this important new industry was regulated under a free market system of gaming; and

WHEREAS, a Jackson native, Stuart C. Irby, Jr., graduated from Louisiana State University in 1948 with a degree in business administration, and continued his studies at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1953-1954; he had served three years in the Army during World War II, his unit landed at Normandy six days after D-Day, and he spent two years in the European Theater; and

WHEREAS, he took over as President and Chairman of Irby Construction Company in 1955, a family business his father had founded in 1926, and Stuart built it up from a small local power line contractor to one of the largest power line contractors in
the world, building power lines in 42 states and 12 international projects in Asia, Africa and Central America; the Stuart C. Irby Company grew to 38 branches in nine states; and

WHEREAS, his business success served as a springboard for his civic and charitable activities; he gave 10% of his company’s earnings to community activities, supporting everything from the Jackson Symphony Orchestra to human service agencies, by issuing a challenge or matching requirement to his funding in order to require the community recipients to have a vested interest in the activity; and

WHEREAS, he believed in getting to the facts, practicing solid logical reasoning and having a person’s actions mirror his words; his personal philanthropy was widely known but quietly practiced; and

WHEREAS, Irby had many varied interests: he was an investor in the State Times Newspaper; an active investor and board member of Deposit Guaranty Bank; a long-time Chairman of French Camp Academy; a founding member of Covenant Presbyterian Church; a founding member of the River Hills Club; a founding member of the Metropolitan Dance/Supper Club; he initiated the first corporate health and fitness programs in Jackson; he founded the Jackson Enterprise Center for new businesses; he donated the former Kress Building to Mississippi State University for its School of Architecture; he was inducted into the Mississippi Business Hall of Fame in 1992; he loved all things English and owned a castle in England; he contributed financially to Belhaven College, where the classroom building called the Irby Complex is named in honor of his family; he was a major supporter of the Jackson (Mississippi) Symphony Orchestra; the Centennial Exhibition at the Mississippi Museum of Art was sponsored by the Irby family where a wing is named in memory of Bitsy Irby; he was a supporter of the Capitol City Stage Band because he loved to dance to the music of his generation; and he contributed to many organizations anonymously,
and the fact that his family continues to be active in many of the
same organizations demonstrates the extent of his civic duty and
philanthropy; and

WHEREAS, Irby is survived by his wife, Debbie West Irby;
sister, Beth Milam; five children, Margaret, Stuart M., Charles,
Joe and Richard; and ten grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, it is with sadness and humility that we recognize
the passing of this remarkable citizen whose business leadership
and generous spirit instilled total commitment to his community
and to the State of Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend the life of Stuart C. Irby,
Jr., Jackson business leader and philanthropist, for his
commitment to his community and state, and express to his family
the sympathy of the Senate on his passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
Stuart's surviving family and be made available to the Capitol
Press Corps.