

By: Representatives Smith (39th), Chism,
Ellis, Harrison

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 45

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION DESIGNATING AND RECOGNIZING MARCH 5,
2 2004, AS TUSKEGEE AIRMEN DAY IN COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI.

3 On July 19, 1942, the Army Air Force began a program in
4 Alabama to train African Americans as military pilots; and

5 WHEREAS, primary flight training was conducted by the
6 Division of Aeronautics of Tuskegee Institute, the famed school of
7 learning founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881; and

8 WHEREAS, the first class of all black pilots graduated on
9 March 7, 1942, and made up the 99th Pursuit Squadron, fighter
10 pilots slated for duty in North Africa; and

11 WHEREAS, additional pilots were assigned to the 332nd Fighter
12 Group, which flew combat along with the 99th Squadron from bases
13 in Italy; and

14 WHEREAS, by the end of World War II, with the last class
15 graduating on June 29, 1946, a total of 926 pilots had earned
16 their wings at Tuskegee; and

17 WHEREAS, 450 Tuskegee pilots were deployed overseas for
18 combat assignment in P-39, P-40, P-47 and P-51 aircraft, of which
19 66 gave the ultimate sacrifice of life in combat action and
20 another 32 became POWs; and

21 WHEREAS, Mississippi is proud to have been called home to ten
22 Tuskegee Airmen, all of whom were Second Lieutenants: Leonelle A.
23 Bonam, Herbert E. Carter, Oliver M. Dillon, Walter M. Downs, John
24 L. Hamilton, Wellington O. Irving, Eddie A. McLaurin, Luke J.
25 Weathers, Quitman C. Walker and Edward L. Toppins; and

26 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to pay special
27 homage to these outstanding and valiant individuals for the

28 sacrifices made and services rendered to the great State of
29 Mississippi and these entire United States of America:

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
31 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
32 THEREIN, That we do hereby designate and recognize March 5, 2004,
33 as Tuskegee Airmen Day in Columbus, Mississippi.

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
35 furnished to the City of Columbus and to the members of the
36 Capitol Press Corps.