

By: Representative Flaggs

To: Rules

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 88

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE, LEGACY AND
2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE LEGENDARY VICKSBURG NAACP LEADER, GEORGE LEE
3 JEFFERSON, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN VERSUS
4 BOARD OF EDUCATION.

5 WHEREAS, after the United States Supreme Court's ruling in
6 *Brown v. Board of Education* on May 17, 1954, George Lee Jefferson,
7 one of Mississippi's wealthiest black men, equipped with his faith
8 in the United States Constitution, sought to ensure Mississippi's
9 immediate compliance with the recent decision; and

10 WHEREAS, the favorite nephew and heir of turn-of-the-century
11 philanthropist, businesswoman and civil rights crusader, Lucy C.
12 Jefferson, George Jefferson was the owner and manager of the
13 historic W.H. Jefferson Funeral Home, Chairman of the Vicksburg
14 Branch NAACP and one of three Mississippi National Republican
15 Committeemen; and

16 WHEREAS, Jefferson, who was equipped with a social conscience
17 and a courageous talent for leadership in the political process,
18 was a prominent driving force for progress in Vicksburg and was
19 very adept at guiding the 1,200 registered black voters of Warren
20 County at that time to political respectability, by using their
21 bloc vote to swing local elections in their favor; and

22 WHEREAS, only 12 days after the Court's *Brown* ruling, NAACP
23 leaders statewide announced their plan to submit petitions and
24 letters to all school districts demanding compliance with the
25 ruling to integrate public schools; and

26 WHEREAS, in conjunction with NAACP Lead Counsel Thurgood
27 Marshall, Jefferson was committed to the cause of ending
28 segregation in a local school district; and

29 WHEREAS, before dedicating himself to ending public school
30 segregation and working toward enforcement of the ruling in *Brown*
31 *v. Board of Education*, Jefferson had secured a credit line that
32 scaled into the millions for his dream of developing
33 top-of-the-line housing for Vicksburg's emerging black
34 middle-class; and

35 WHEREAS, engulfed by his goal of public school integration in
36 Mississippi, Jefferson suffered for his beliefs in many ways,
37 including being barred by the banks from using any of the money in
38 his credit accounts, and he was ultimately reduced to abject
39 poverty; and

40 WHEREAS, very few Mississippians know the story of George L.
41 Jefferson, who died in 1961, never seeing either of his dreams
42 come into fruition, and of his Aunt Lucy, whose good works
43 impacted the entire state; and

44 WHEREAS, Oakley Training School, Cedar Grove Home for the
45 Aged, the Mississippi State Conference of Federated Colored
46 Women's Clubs, NAACP respectability in Mississippi, pre-civil
47 rights era voting rights for black people and the challenges to
48 the segregated school system, all were real-world achievements to
49 which the Jeffersons contributed; and

50 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to recognize
51 and commend works of notable Mississippians, such as the life and
52 legacy of George Lee Jefferson, whose commitment to securing
53 equality and a better means of living for black Mississippians was
54 monumental in bringing about social transformation in this state:

55 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
56 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
57 THEREIN, That we do hereby commend the life and legacy of
58 legendary Vicksburg NAACP leader and businessman, George Lee
59 Jefferson, upon the 50th anniversary of the United States Supreme
60 Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

61 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
62 furnished to the Vicksburg Branch NAACP, the immediate survivors
63 of George L. Jefferson and to the members of the Capitol Press
64 Corps.