

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Horhn, Walls, Thomas, Harden, Simmons, Gollott, Hyde-Smith, Browning, Jackson (11th), Frazier, Dearing, Bryan, Walley, Clarke, Jackson (32nd), Butler, Chamberlin, King, White, Wilemon, Jackson (15th), Kirby, Michel, Morgan, Lee (35th), Carmichael, Pickering, Chaney, Little, Williamson, Ross, Nunnelee

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 601

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE CAREER AND PUBLIC
2 SERVICE OF AWARD-WINNING ACTRESS DR. TOMMIE H. (TONEA) STEWART OF
3 GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI, AND WELCOMING HER TO MISSISSIPPI.

4 WHEREAS, "A Time to Kill" Actress and Director of Drama at
5 Alabama State University (ASU), Dr. Tommie H. (Tonea) Stewart,
6 gives motivational presentations to students through the eyes of
7 her grandfather, a former slave, encouraging them to make a
8 difference in the world through their God-given talent; and

9 WHEREAS, "Tonea" Stewart, a native of Greenwood, Mississippi,
10 has lived in Montgomery, Alabama, since 1990. She is a tenured
11 Professor and the Director of Theatre Arts at Alabama State
12 University. Also, she is a professional actress; and

13 WHEREAS, as Director of Theatre, Tonea serves as a teacher,
14 role model and mentor to many students at ASU. Since her arrival,
15 the number of Theatre majors and minors, and the number of
16 graduates from the program has soared. Youth from the Montgomery
17 area and across the nation have been touched by Tonea's artistry
18 through T.A.P.S. (Theatre Artists Performance School) and Camp 3T
19 (Teaching Through Theatre), summer performance and enrichment
20 camps; and

21 WHEREAS, after receiving a B.S. degree in Speech and Theatre
22 from Jackson State University and an M.A. in Theatre Arts from the
23 University of California at Santa Barbara, Tonea completed her
24 Ph.D. in Theatre Arts at Florida State University (FSU) in 1989.
25 She was the first African-American female to receive a doctorate
26 from the FSU School of Theatre and the first McKnight Doctoral
27 Fellow in Theatre Arts. During her study at FSU, Tonea also

28 received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the
29 Humanities; and

30 WHEREAS, as an actress, Tonea is perhaps best known for her
31 recurring role in "In the Heat of the Night." More recently, she
32 co-produced an independent feature film, "Roper and Goodie," and
33 was Associate Producer of the CBS movie, "The Rosa Parks Story."
34 She has earned an NAACP Image Award nomination for her role in the
35 film adaptation of John Grisham's "A Time to Kill" and The Gold
36 Medal Award for the narration of Public Radio International Series
37 "Remembering Slavery," and is the 1999 Rabriel Award Winner.
38 Tonea began her acting career in 1969 and became the first
39 African-American to direct and star at New Stage Theatre, the most
40 prestigious equity theatre in Mississippi. Since then, she has
41 performed on stage in Canada, Mexico, South Korea and throughout
42 the United States, including Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center,
43 and has appeared on screen and television. Some notable titles
44 include: "Mississippi Burning," "Invasion of the Body Snatchers
45 III," "Living Large, My Stepson/My Lover," "Walker Texas Ranger,"
46 "Matlock," "Leave of Absence," "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,"
47 "ER" and "Touched by an Angel"; and

48 WHEREAS, Tonea is a spokesperson for "One Church, One Child"
49 of Alabama and for Alabama Adult Foster Care. In 1995, she was
50 inducted into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame. She
51 has honorary doctorates from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake,
52 Iowa and Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas, and has
53 received numerous keys to cities throughout the United States; and

54 WHEREAS, Tonea is a member of the Order of The Golden Circle,
55 a life member of the NAACP, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and a
56 dedicated member of Hutchinson Baptist Church. She is married to
57 Dr. Allen Stewart. They have three children; and

58 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the
59 contributions of this well-known spokesperson who has meant so

60 much and brought honor to her hometown of Greenwood and to the
61 State of Mississippi:

62 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
63 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
64 we do hereby commend the career and public service of
65 award-winning actress Dr. Tommie H. (Tonea) Stewart of Greenwood,
66 Mississippi, and welcome her and her family to Mississippi and
67 extend to them the best wishes of the Legislature on future
68 endeavors.

69 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
70 Dr. Tonea Stewart and be made available to the Capitol Press
71 Corps.