

By: Senator(s) Walls, Jackson
(11th), Jordan, Thomas, Butler,
Jackson (32nd), Harden, Simmons,
Williamson

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 9

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVICE
2 OF HONORABLE WALTER WRIGHT THOMPSON, SR., OF CLARKSDALE,
3 MISSISSIPPI, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE.

4 WHEREAS, Honorable Walter Thompson, Sr., 58, an attorney and
5 friend to the most powerful Democrats in the country, died
6 September 29, 2004, in Memphis, Tennessee. Funeral services were
7 held October 1, 2004, at St. George's Episcopal Church in
8 Clarksdale, Mississippi; and

9 WHEREAS, he was born in Bentonia and grew up in Southern
10 Mississippi. His father was a farmer and he and his brothers all
11 lived in the same room. The urge to be thrifty was one he carried
12 with him all his life, said his eldest son, Walter Wright
13 Thompson, Jr., a Journalist who lives in Kansas City, Missouri;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Thompson's desire was to become a lawyer, so he
16 attended both undergraduate and graduate school at the University
17 of Mississippi. He first started practicing law in the 1970s, and
18 his first firm was with then Lt. Gov. Charlie Sullivan of
19 Clarksdale. Law and politics were always high on his list; and

20 WHEREAS, "Practicing law was truly one of his passions,"
21 Wright said. "He literally had clients from Bill Clinton to some
22 who paid his fee with tomatoes. His real passion for the past
23 decade had been with lawsuits involving nursing homes. It was
24 more than a job, he was generally upset about the way the elderly
25 were treated." Politics and his church, St. George's Episcopal,
26 were also huge parts of Thompson's life; and

27 WHEREAS, when he was in high school, he was a Page for
28 Senator John Stennis, and he was actually on the Senate floor when
29 Medicare became law. He was among one of the first group of
30 people on an exploratory committee for Bill Clinton's campaign.
31 He was a life-long member of the Democratic Party, and a national
32 fundraiser for people like John Glenn, Al Gore and Bill Clinton;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, Walter was good friends with a lot of civil rights
35 leaders and he was very passionate about equal opportunity; and

36 WHEREAS, among the survivors is Thompson's wife of 34 years,
37 Mary McKenzie, a native of Shelby. Other survivors include a son,
38 William McKenzie Thompson; and brothers, Frazier R. Thompson of
39 Memphis, William P. Thompson of Yazoo City and Michael H. Thompson
40 of Memphis; and

41 WHEREAS, Thompson served as the Chairman of the Coahoma
42 County Democratic Committee for 21 years. Thompson served on the
43 Democratic Committee until his death, and those who worked with
44 him spoke fondly of him; and

45 WHEREAS, a retired Captain with the Judge Advocate General
46 (JAG) Corps in the United States Army Reserve, he was born on
47 April 14, 1946. He graduated from the University of Mississippi
48 in 1968, and the University of Mississippi Law School in 1971; and

49 WHEREAS, Thompson was a former President of the Coahoma
50 County Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Board of Governors
51 of the Mississippi Trial Lawyers Association. Thompson also
52 served on the Mississippi Democratic Executive Committee and the
53 Board of Directors for the Democratic National Executive
54 Committee. He was the Mississippi State Finance Chairman for
55 Senator John Glenn, Governor Michael Dukakis, Governor Bill
56 Clinton and Senator Al Gore and the Mississippi Finance Chairman
57 for the Clinton-Gore Presidential Campaign. In 2004, he was
58 awarded the Stanford Young Award for the Most Outstanding
59 Democratic Attorney in Mississippi. He was also a member of

60 Omicron Delta Kappa, Scabbard and Blade and Phi Delta Theta. He
61 was a member of the Lamar Order, University of Mississippi Law
62 Center, and served on the vestry of St. George's Episcopal Church;
63 and

64 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this
65 respected Mississippi lawyer, whose influence extended to our
66 nation's capital:

67 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
68 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend the life and dedicated
69 public service of Honorable Walter Wright Thompson, Sr., of
70 Clarksdale, Mississippi, and express to his family the sympathy of
71 the Senate on his passing.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
73 the surviving family of Walter Thompson, Sr., and be made
74 available to the Capitol Press Corps.