

By: Senator(s) Harden

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 4

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE OF RADIO HOST, GOSPEL
2 PIONEER AND CIVIC ACTIVIST BRUCE PAYNE OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI,
3 AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE SENATE.

4 WHEREAS, longtime radio host and gospel pioneer Bruce Payne,
5 age 75, died Wednesday, October 2, 2005; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Payne was a Vicksburg native born on September
7 7, 1930; he was one of the first black radio announcers in the
8 state. He was Director of Public Affairs and Journalist for radio
9 stations WOAD and WJMI in Jackson, Mississippi, and was known as
10 "the Dean" of gospel music; and

11 WHEREAS, with a career that spanned more than 50 years, Payne
12 worked at Jackson stations such as WOAD and WZRZ-1590 AM. He was
13 also a radio host in Alabama and Louisiana. His longest stint was
14 at the black-operated WOKJ in Jackson, Mississippi, from 1961 to
15 1988, where among other jobs, he served as a news reporter
16 covering civil rights activities in the 1960s; and

17 WHEREAS, Payne also worked as a music promoter in the 1960s
18 and 1970s, bringing the likes of The Staple Singers to town. In
19 honor of his music promotion career, the annual Jackson Music
20 Awards will memorialize Payne with the Statewide Announcer Award,
21 which will be attached to the award's title; and

22 WHEREAS, his education began at St. Mary's Catholic High
23 School in Vicksburg, Mississippi, where he graduated in 1948. He
24 attended Miles College in Birmingham, Alabama, where he received a
25 B.S. degree in Business Administration in 1960. He has done
26 further study at Belhaven College. He received an Honorary

27 Doctorate of Humanities degree from McKinley Theological Seminary
28 in 1977; and

29 WHEREAS, Mr. Payne was a member of the Pratt Memorial United
30 Methodist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, where he served as
31 Chairman of the Trustee Board, and Secretary of the Methodist Men.
32 He was a Mason, Shriner, Secretary of the Independent Progressive
33 Club, NAACP, Elks, charter member of the Jackson Business League,
34 member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Salt & Pepper Club,
35 and a board member of the Jackson Advocate, the Urban League and
36 the Capitol Boys Club; and

37 WHEREAS, Mr. Payne's awards include: American Legion
38 Distinguished Service, Shriners Certificate of Merit, VFW
39 Distinguished and Meritorious Awards, National Business League
40 Award for Outstanding Service and a Certificate of Appreciation
41 from Governor William Waller in 1975. He received the Tougaloo
42 College Distinguished Service Award in 1983, and in 1984, was
43 honored with an award in his name: The Bruce Payne Journalism
44 Award. He has received the WOKJ Employee of the Year Award &
45 Gospel Disc Jockey of the Year Award three times at the Gospel
46 Music Awards. His most recent awards include: United Negro
47 College Fund "Beautiful People Award," and the United Negro
48 College Fund Volunteer Service Award. In 1988, he received an
49 award for continuous community involvement on behalf of older
50 citizens given by the Mississippi Council on Aging; and

51 WHEREAS, Payne is survived by his wife, Vivian Thompson Payne
52 and three children, Shannon, Charles and Charita; and

53 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this
54 respected citizen and community leader:

55 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
56 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend the life of radio host,
57 gospel music pioneer and civic activist Bruce Payne of Vicksburg,
58 Mississippi, and express the sympathy of the Senate on his
59 passing.

60 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
61 the surviving family of Bruce Payne and be made available to the
62 Capitol Press Corps.