

By: Senator(s) Dawkins, Williamson, Jordan,
Dearing, Horhn, Jackson (11th), Frazier,
Thomas, Butler, Chaney, Little

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 528

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING
2 CLARION-LEDGER INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER JERRY MITCHELL UPON BEING
3 NAMED THE 2005 WINNER OF THE JOHN CHANCELLOR AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
4 IN JOURNALISM.

5 WHEREAS, *Clarion-Ledger* investigative reporter Jerry Mitchell
6 has been named the 2005 Winner of the John Chancellor Award for
7 Excellence in Journalism from Columbia University for his 16-year
8 effort to bring Civil Rights Era killers to justice; and

9 WHEREAS, at 46, Mitchell is the youngest recipient of the
10 award, whose previous winners include, veteran Mississippi newsman
11 Bill Minor as well as several *New York Times* correspondents; Jim
12 Wooten, who filed stories for ABC News from 40 countries to report
13 on upheaval around the world; and the late Mary McGrory, who
14 reported on Washington for more than five decades; and

15 WHEREAS, Mitchell for 16 years worked to uncover evidence in
16 the unsolved killings of civil rights activists. His reporting
17 has led to the conviction of four individuals; and

18 WHEREAS, the \$25,000.00 annual John Chancellor Award,
19 administered by the Columbia University School of Journalism,
20 recognizes and rewards a journalist whose reporting over time
21 shows courage, integrity, curiosity and intelligence and
22 epitomizes the role of journalism in a free society. Mitchell
23 received the honor November 29, 2005, at a black-tie celebration
24 at the University's Low Memorial Library; and

25 WHEREAS, Jerry Mitchell, is a special projects reporter for
26 the *Clarion-Ledger* and author of *The Preacher and the Klansman*.
27 He spent six months researching, interviewing the story's
28 characters, traveling to places described, and collecting state

29 Sovereignty Commission records and other documents. His research
30 helped to reconstruct events, dialogue and details. On October
31 26, 1998, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., he and three
32 other journalists were honored by the Anti-Defamation League for
33 "their courage and conviction"; and

34 WHEREAS, Jerry Mitchell doesn't look the part of a crusader.
35 Soft-spoken, and self-effacing, Mitchell is one of the last people
36 you would choose out of a crowd to be a bona fide rabble-rouser;
37 and

38 WHEREAS, Mitchell's exploits were documented in part in the
39 movie *Ghosts of Mississippi*, a dramatic retelling of the real-life
40 effort of Mitchell and others to solve the 1963 assassination of
41 Medgar Evers; and

42 WHEREAS, he joined the *Clarion-Ledger* staff in his 20's, with
43 his only previous experience in small town papers in Arkansas.
44 Mitchell has been featured by *ABC's 20/20*, *Brill's Content*,
45 *Nightline*, and other media for his continuing efforts to ferret
46 out the truth about events taking place during the 1950s and
47 1960s; and

48 WHEREAS, Jerry Mitchell is deserving of this award because of
49 his determined pursuit of the truth. He has shown strong,
50 hard-nosed journalism throughout his career. He has a heart for
51 people and a tremendous sense of justice; and

52 WHEREAS, "This award doesn't belong to me," Mitchell said.
53 "It belongs to those who fought so that all Americans could be
54 free. It belongs to those who never gave up hope and never gave
55 up their belief in justice. It belongs to those who work with me
56 and all those who have made Mississippi a better place."; and

57 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize this
58 singular achievement by this individual who has brought honor to
59 his newspaper and to the State of Mississippi:

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
61 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That

62 we do hereby commend and congratulate *Clarion-Ledger* investigative
63 reporter Jerry Mitchell upon being named the 2005 Winner of the
64 John Chancellor Award for Excellence in Journalism, and extend to
65 him the best wishes of the Legislature in his future endeavors.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That this resolution be presented to
67 Jerry Mitchell and be made available to *The Clarion-Ledger* and
68 members of the Capitol Press Corps.