

By: Senator(s) Jordan

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 19

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF AUTHOR,
2 PLAYWRIGHT AND TEACHER ENDESHA IDA MAE HOLLAND, PH.D., OF
3 GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE SENATE.

4 WHEREAS, author, playwright, educator, nominee for the
5 Pulitzer Prize and civil rights activist Endesha Ida Mae Holland,
6 Ph.D., of Greenwood, Mississippi, passed away on Wednesday,
7 January 25, 2006, at the age of 61; and

8 WHEREAS, since early childhood, Endesha Ida Mae Holland's
9 life was touched by poverty, racism and violence; but civil
10 rights, education and love of family changed the direction of this
11 extraordinary woman's life, and we are all the richer for it; and

12 WHEREAS, in the year 1983, Ida Mae Holland added Endesha to
13 her name after she met Dr. Maulana Karenga, a scholar of African
14 history and culture, who is also the creator of Kwanza. Holland
15 added this name not only to distinguish herself from her mother
16 (for they shared the name Ida Mae) but also to symbolize the way
17 she had motivated herself and others to reach beyond where they
18 came from. Endesha is a Swahili word that means "driver - she who
19 drives herself and others forward." This name embodies all that
20 Holland stands for and all that her memoir *From the Mississippi*
21 *Delta* describes. She is a woman who drove herself through
22 terrible odds to pursue and realize her dreams; and

23 WHEREAS, in her memoir, she tells of her trials and
24 tribulations that seemed inescapable. She was kicked out of
25 school in ninth grade, and was pregnant and in jail at age
26 sixteen. Her mother constantly reminded Holland that she could
27 shape her own future. Through her own determination and the drive

28 that she had to make something of her life, Holland eventually
29 turned things around, joined the Civil Rights Movement, moved to
30 the Twin Cities and began college at the University of Minnesota;
31 and

32 WHEREAS, Holland graduated with her BA in African-American
33 studies in 1979, thirteen years after she started. She received
34 her Masters Degree in American Studies five years later. Two
35 years later, Holland was awarded her Ph.D. on May 25, 1985, from
36 the University of Minnesota. This was the moment that she had
37 been waiting for her entire life. She invited everyone that she
38 knew to come see just how far she had traveled from the
39 Mississippi Delta; and

40 WHEREAS, aside from her highly esteemed memoir, Holland also
41 wrote seven plays. The three that have received the most
42 recognition are *From the Mississippi Delta*, *Second Doctor Lady*,
43 and *The Reconstruction of Dossie Ree Hemphill*. The latter two
44 were written about Holland's mother, Ida Mae. *Second Doctor Lady*
45 is the story of her mother's struggle to become a midwife. *The*
46 *Reconstruction of Dossie Ree Hemphill* also tells the story of her
47 mother but from the perspective of her peers. *From the*
48 *Mississippi Delta* was inspired by her memoir. This three-woman
49 play has been performed across the country and has received many
50 positive reviews; and

51 WHEREAS, these works have led Holland to receive many
52 prestigious awards, including the First Annual Playwriting Award,
53 the ACTF Student Playwriting Award of the University of Minnesota,
54 the Second Place Lorraine Hansberry Award, and she was nominated
55 for a Pulitzer Prize. Also, the Mayor of Greenwood, Mississippi,
56 dedicated a day to her, calling it "Endesha Ida Mae 'Cat' Holland
57 Day" on October 18, 1991; and

58 WHEREAS, Holland is survived by her son, Cedric Holland; her
59 sister, Jean Beasley; granddaughter; all of Buffalo, New York; and
60 a brother, Charlie "Bud" Nellums, of Greenwood; and

61 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this
62 Mississippi author and playwright who was subjected to poverty,
63 racism and broken dreams and still worked her way to a better
64 life:

65 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
66 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend and celebrate the life of
67 noted Mississippi author, playwright and teacher Endesha Ida Mae
68 Holland, Ph.D., of Greenwood, Mississippi, and express to her
69 surviving family the sympathy of the Senate on her passing.

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
71 the surviving family of Ms. Holland and be made available to the
72 Capitol Press Corps.