

By: Representatives Perkins, Flagg,  
Blackmon, Cockerham, Coleman (29th), Evans,  
Fredericks, Huddleston, Malone, Myers, Scott,  
Whittington

To: Rules

## HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 38

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MS. WILLYE B.  
2 WHITE, THE FIRST AMERICAN AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE TO APPEAR IN  
3 FIVE OLYMPICS AND EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY UPON HER PASSING.

4 WHEREAS, the world lost an athletic icon when Willye B.  
5 White, the first American and first African-American female to  
6 appear in five Olympics, passed this life at age 67; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1981, the State of Mississippi recognized the  
8 athletic contributions made by Ms. White by inducting her into the  
9 Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame; and

10 WHEREAS, although she passed as a Chicago resident, she was a  
11 daughter of the Mississippi Delta, because she was born in the  
12 tiny Mississippi Delta town of Money and raised in the Greenwood  
13 area; and

14 WHEREAS, she was an exceptional athlete and enthusiastically  
15 exhibited her athletic prowess during a time when it wasn't all  
16 that socially acceptable for girls to excel in sports; and

17 WHEREAS, in spite of the times, she broke loose from the  
18 poverty of the Delta and attended Tennessee State University from  
19 1959-1962 and achieved national acclaim with the same Tigerbelle  
20 team that produced Wilma Rudolph; and

21 WHEREAS, she was often called Tom Sawyer because she ran  
22 barefoot just as well as she did in shoes; and

23 WHEREAS, as history tells us, she abandoned running barefoot  
24 to become a polished, amazing athlete; and

25 WHEREAS, as evidence of her polished talent, she appeared in  
26 every Olympics between 1956 and 1972, winning two silver medals,

27 one in the long jump in 1956 and the other in the 4x100 meter  
28 relay in 1964; and

29 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to  
30 recognize and commend native Mississippi athletes who have  
31 contributed to history by gaining national acclaim in their sport:

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
33 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we commend the  
34 life and legacy of Ms. Willye B. White, the first American and  
35 first African-American female to appear in five Olympics and  
36 express our sympathy upon her passing.

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
38 furnished to the family of Ms. Willye B. White and members of the  
39 Capitol Press Corps.