

By: Senator(s) Dawkins, Butler, Frazier,
Jackson (11th), Jordan

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 527

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE
2 LEGISLATURE ON THE DEATH OF RETIRED NEWSPAPER EDITOR AND PULITZER
3 PRIZE-WINNER IRA B. HARKEY, JR., AND CELEBRATING HIS LIFE AND
4 LEGACY.

5 WHEREAS, retired newspaper Editor and Pulitzer Prize-winner
6 Ira B. Harkey, Jr., Mississippi Civil Rights "Conscience," passed
7 away on Sunday, October 8, 2006 in Kerrville, Texas; and

8 WHEREAS, Harkey, 88, had been a Journalist and Editor in New
9 Orleans, Louisiana and Pascagoula, Mississippi, where he worked at
10 *The Times-Picayune* and was Editor and Publisher of *The Chronicle*
11 *Star*, predecessor of *The Mississippi Press*, for 14 years; and

12 WHEREAS, Harkey, Jr., won the Pulitzer Prize in 1963 for his
13 editorials calling for a peaceful 1962 integration of the
14 University of Mississippi, where James Meredith became the first
15 black student. At the time, he was vilified for his editorials,
16 his life was threatened, and *The Chronicle Star* was boycotted as
17 well as its advertisers. Harkey detailed these events in his
18 autobiography, "The Smell of Burning Crosses," in 1967; and

19 WHEREAS, Jerry St. Pe, who was a young reporter at *The*
20 *Chronicle Star* during the Civil Rights era, nominated Ira Harkey
21 for Ole Miss' Silver Em Journalism Award. He said Harkey was a
22 mentor and friend and had a tremendous influence on his life
23 personally and professionally over the years. "This is a
24 tremendous loss to all of us who have benefited so much by Ira.
25 He was a great journalist who stood tall when Mississippi needed
26 to have a check put on our conscience. He was the conscience of
27 Mississippi"; and

28 WHEREAS, Harkey came from New Orleans and bought the
29 Pascagoula paper in 1949. After expanding *The Chronicle* from a
30 weekly to a twice-a-week paper and then five-day publication, he
31 sold it. He went on to teach journalism at Ohio State University,
32 then to the University of Alaska, and joined the staff at Columbia
33 University; and

34 WHEREAS, four of Ira Harkey's children remain in Jackson
35 County, including Circuit Court Judge Dale Harkey; one lives in
36 Columbia, Mississippi; one lives in Beaumont, Texas; and one in
37 Minneapolis, Minnesota. Harkey and his wife, Virgie, had retired
38 to Kerrville, Texas; and

39 WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi has lost a journalist and
40 leader whose inspiration was to change America and the world. May
41 he rest in peace and may we all do our part to honor his life and
42 legacy with our words and actions:

43 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
44 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
45 we do hereby express the sympathy of the Legislature on the death
46 of retired newspaper Editor and Pulitzer Prize-winner Ira B.
47 Harkey, Jr., and celebrate his life and legacy as an unwavering
48 advocate of civil and human rights and a champion of nonviolence
49 which is to be admired and emulated.

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
51 the surviving family of Ira B. Harkey, Jr., and be made available
52 to *The Sun Herald* and to members of the Capitol Press Corps.