

By: Senator(s) Williamson, Thames, Dawkins, Walls, Frazier, Jordan, Harden, Simmons, Horhn, Thomas To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 600

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
2 CHESTER A. THIGPEN, FORMER NATIONAL AND MISSISSIPPI OUTSTANDING
3 TREE FARMER OF THE YEAR, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE
4 LEGISLATURE.

5 WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi has lost a leading
6 spokesman for the tree-farming community with the passing of
7 Chester A. Thigpen, 95, of Bay Springs, Mississippi, formerly of
8 Montrose, on January 8, 2007; and

9 WHEREAS, spokesman, pioneer, community-minded -- these words
10 describe the philosophy of this outstanding Mississippi citizen;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, on March 21, 1996, both houses of the Mississippi
13 Legislature honored Chester and Rosett Thigpen, National
14 Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year with a resolution, signed by
15 Speaker of the House Tim Ford and Lieutenant Governor Ronnie
16 Musgrove, commending the Thigpens. Chester Thigpen spoke before
17 both houses and entertained members with stories of his thirty
18 years of tree farming. Thigpen considered himself an ambassador
19 for forestry in Mississippi, and spent a lifetime practicing and
20 promoting forestry; and

21 WHEREAS, the Thigpens were Mississippi's 1994 Outstanding
22 Tree Farmers of the Year. After facing stiff competition from
23 73,000 other tree farmers across the nation, they received the
24 national award November 4, 1995, at the National Tree Farmer
25 Convention in St. Louis, Missouri; and

26 WHEREAS, as National Outstanding Tree Farmer, Chester Thigpen
27 served for two years on the National Tree Farm Operating
28 Committee, which oversees the tree farm program. Also, he served

29 as a spokesman for the American Tree Farm System and served on the
30 Editorial Board of *Tree Farmer Magazine*; and

31 WHEREAS, both Chester and Rosett Thigpen were born on
32 portions of the land that now make up the tree farm. With the
33 help of their county forester, they developed a written forestry
34 land management plan when they became tree farmers, and the land
35 remained under a written land management plan for 45 years. Tree
36 farm income provided college educations for the five Thigpen
37 children; and

38 WHEREAS, Chester Thigpen served on the Mississippi Forestry
39 Commission, on the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Forestry
40 Association, and as President of the Jasper County Forestry
41 Association. He traveled to Washington, D.C., in February 1995 to
42 testify before the U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means
43 Committee in support of estate tax reform. By promoting forestry
44 field days and county forestry associations, Thigpen shared his
45 knowledge of good stewardship with his community; and

46 WHEREAS, in 1966, Chester Thigpen served on the Mississippi
47 Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's Advisory
48 Committee. This position took him to Washington, D.C., where he
49 advised the national organization on erosion control and
50 cost-share programs. Thigpen was appointed by Governor Winter to
51 serve a seven-year term on the Mississippi Forestry Commission.
52 In 1983, Thigpen was entered into the Mississippi Agriculture and
53 Forestry Museum's Hall of Fame. He was instrumental in organizing
54 the Jasper County Forestry Association; and

55 WHEREAS, Chester Thigpen was always philosophical when
56 speaking about the long-term benefits of tree farming. "It could
57 reduce crime and welfare. It helps keep your mind off things."
58 He also recommended tree farming for those getting on in years.
59 "If you can't handle the cattle and hay anymore, move over to
60 trees totally. The trees grow while I sleep"; and

61 WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his wife, Rosett
62 Thigpen; daughter, Inez Pride; father, Frank Thigpen; and mother,
63 Pinkie Tenort Thigpen. He is survived by two sons, Roy (Julia)
64 Thigpen and Lonnie (Doris) Thigpen, all of Montrose; two
65 daughters, Doris Williams of Irvine, California, and Hester
66 (Phield III), Parish of Greenville, Louisiana; 15 grandchildren;
67 and a host of great-grandchildren; and

68 WHEREAS, Chester Thigpen and his late wife, Rosett,
69 represented what is best about forestry in Mississippi, and the
70 forestry community and the State of Mississippi are very proud of
71 them and will miss their service and their friendship:

72 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
73 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
74 we do hereby commend the life and legacy to the forestry community
75 of our state of Chester A. Thigpen of Bay Springs, Mississippi,
76 former National and Mississippi Outstanding Tree Farmer of the
77 Year, and express the sympathy of the Legislature on his passing.

78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
79 the surviving family of Chester Thigpen, be forwarded to the
80 Mississippi Forestry Association and be made available to the
81 Capitol Press Corps.