

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Horhn, Thomas,  
Williamson, Chaney, Walls, Gollott, Lee  
(35th), Jackson (11th), Frazier, Hewes,  
Mettetal, Chassaniol, Kirby, Fillingane,  
Butler, Carmichael, Harden, Simmons, Turner,  
Tollison, Browning, Jackson (32nd), Nunnelee,  
Gordon, Lee (47th), Cuevas, Hyde-Smith,  
Clarke, Jackson (15th), Dawkins, White,  
Albritton, Dearing, Little

To: Rules

## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 603

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LITERARY CAREER OF  
2 LERONE BENNETT, JR., OF CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXPRESSING  
3 THE APPRECIATION OF THE LEGISLATURE.

4 WHEREAS, Lerone Bennett, Jr., is one of Mississippi's most  
5 successful black writers of the Twentieth Century; and

6 WHEREAS, Lerone Bennett, Jr., the Historian and Executive  
7 Editor Emeritus of *Ebony* Magazine, is the author of ten books,  
8 including *Before The Mayflower*, which *American Legacy Magazine*  
9 called "one of the most popular single-volume histories of blacks  
10 ever written"; and

11 WHEREAS, the author, who calls himself a witness-participant,  
12 was born in Clarksdale, Mississippi, on October 17, 1928, the son  
13 of Alma Reed Bennett and Lerone Bennett, Sr., and moved with his  
14 family at an early age to Jackson, Mississippi. He graduated from  
15 Lanier High School in 1945 and started his journalism career as a  
16 teenage reporter for the *Jackson Advocate* and the *Mississippi*  
17 *Enterprise*. During his early years, he led the Duke Bennett jazz  
18 orchestra, which performed in Mississippi and Louisiana; and

19 WHEREAS, after graduating from Atlanta's Morehouse College,  
20 he served as City Editor of the *Atlanta Daily World*. He joined  
21 Johnson Publishing Company in 1953 and became Associate Editor of  
22 *Ebony* in 1954. He became Executive Editor of *Ebony* in 1987 and  
23 Executive Editor Emeritus on his retirement in 2003. He assisted  
24 John H. Johnson, the legendary *Ebony* publisher, in the preparation  
25 of his classic book, *Succeeding Against The Odds*, which is a  
26 must-read for anyone interested in blacks and corporate America;  
27 and

28           WHEREAS, the author was visiting Professor of History at  
29 Northwestern University. His books, poems and short stores have  
30 been translated into French, German, Japanese, Swedish, Arabic and  
31 Russian. He received the Patron Saints Award of the Society of  
32 Midland Authors for a biography of his Morehouse college mate,  
33 Martin Luther King, Jr., and the American Book Award for his study  
34 of Abraham Lincoln, *Forced into Glory*. He has also received the  
35 Literature Award of the American Academy of Arts and Letters; and

36           WHEREAS, in 1978, he was featured at the Chancellor's  
37 Symposium on Southern History at the University of Mississippi.  
38 In 1997, he was cited as a distinguished Mississippian at the  
39 University of Mississippi, and he was featured, along with Richard  
40 Wright, Eudora Welty, Shelby Foote, Margaret Walker and others, in  
41 the book *Mississippi Writers: Reflections of Childhood and Youth*;  
42 and

43           WHEREAS, Mr. Bennett is married to the former Gloria  
44 Sylvester, and they are the parents of four children: Joy,  
45 Constance, Courtney and Lerone III. His sister, Elnor Hickman,  
46 also graduated from Lanier High School and his aunt, Thelma Reed  
47 Blackmon, lived in Jackson for many years; and

48           WHEREAS, he serves on the Board of Trustees of Columbia  
49 College, Chicago, Illinois, and the Chicago History Museum.  
50 President Clinton appointed him to the President's Committee on  
51 the Arts and Humanities, and President George W. Bush appointed  
52 him to the Presidential Commission on the proposed National Museum  
53 of African-American History and Culture; and

54           WHEREAS, in 1996, he received the highest honor of the Martin  
55 Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, the "Salute  
56 to Greatness" Award. In 2003, he received the highest honor of  
57 the Association for the Study of African-American Life and  
58 History, the Carter G. Woodson Medallion. In 2004, he received  
59 the Distinguished W.E.B. DuBois Scholarship Award of the  
60 Association of Social and Behavioral Scientists. In 2006, he was

61 inducted into the Hall of Fame of the National Association of  
62 Black Journalists. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Delta  
63 Chi Journalism Society, Sigma Phi Pi and Kappa Alpha Psi; and

64 WHEREAS, he was inducted into the International Civil Rights  
65 Walk of Fame, and he said there what he has said repeatedly, "I  
66 owe more than I can ever repay to the black schoolteachers of  
67 Mississippi, who literally saved my life and who taught me that  
68 there was no limit to what I could dream and do"; and

69 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the  
70 accomplishments of this noted author and historian who has brought  
71 honor to his home community and to the State of Mississippi:

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 literary career of Lerone Bennett, Jr.,  
75 of Clarksdale, Mississippi, express the appreciation of the  
76 Legislature and welcome him and his family back to his home state.

77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
78 Mr. Bennett and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.