

By: Senator(s) Michel,
Chassaniol

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 502

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
2 FORMER LEGISLATOR JOHN E. "JOHNNY" ALDRIDGE OF JACKSON AND WINONA,
3 MISSISSIPPI, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE.

4 WHEREAS, John E. "Johnny" Aldridge, 94, of Jackson and
5 formerly of Winona, died April 22, 2007. Prior to his death, he
6 was believed to be the oldest past member of the Mississippi
7 Legislature, both Senate and House; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Aldridge, a native of Winona, was born September
9 21, 1912, the son of Charles Hendrix and Cammie Peeples Aldridge,
10 who were both originally from Lodi. He graduated from Winona High
11 School in 1930, received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the
12 University of Mississippi in 1934 and his Bachelor of Laws degree
13 (LLB) from Ole Miss in 1935; and

14 WHEREAS, he was active in Mississippi politics most all of
15 his life and was on a first name basis with every Mississippi
16 Governor for over the past 80 years; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1937, he began as a member of the Montgomery
18 County Election Commission, was elected as a Delegate to the 1943,
19 1951, 1955 and 1959 Mississippi Democrat Party Conventions and was
20 later a Delegate to the 1988 Mississippi Republican Party
21 Convention. In addition, he was a member of the Hinds County
22 Republican Executive Committee and was the first Chairman of
23 Senior Citizens for Reagan/Bush for the State of Mississippi; and

24 WHEREAS, in 1939 and 1947, he was elected Floater
25 Representative of Montgomery and Grenada Counties in the
26 Mississippi State Legislature. His father had also previously
27 served two terms as a member of the House. As Floater

28 Representative, he couldn't succeed himself since the other
29 floater county was given an opportunity to alternate
30 representation every other term. In between those two four-year
31 House terms, Johnny was elected in 1943 to the Mississippi State
32 Senate from Montgomery and Carroll Counties; and

33 WHEREAS, during his 12 years of legislative service, he was
34 Chairman of the Forestry, Conservation, and Juvenile Delinquency
35 and Child Welfare Committees. He also was appointed Chairman of
36 the Joint Senate-House Interim Committee to study child welfare
37 legislation and was responsible for helping write and pass the
38 Youth Court Act of 1946. He was then appointed by Governor
39 Fielding Wright and subsequently by Governor Hugh White as a
40 member of the Children's Code Commission representing the Fourth
41 Congressional District from 1946 to 1954. As a legislator, he was
42 also responsible for creating a number of farm-to-market roads in
43 Montgomery, Carroll and Grenada Counties, and establishing a State
44 Tree Nursery in Winona; and

45 WHEREAS, despite being exempt from having to go into military
46 service, he voluntarily enlisted as a Private for active duty in
47 the United States Army in World War II, where he served in Germany
48 during the war effort. After the war, one of his principal
49 efforts was to serve veterans and help countless Mississippians
50 receive their veteran pensions and benefits without compensation;
51 and

52 WHEREAS, in a special election in November 1950, he was
53 elected District Attorney of the Fifth Mississippi Judicial
54 District, and was twice reelected. In this capacity, he
55 prosecuted with great ability and handled one of the state's most
56 notable criminal cases, the Goldsby murder trial. He resigned as
57 District Attorney in January 1960, when he was appointed by
58 Governor-elect Ross Barnett as his Executive Legal Counsel and
59 Legislative Aide; and

60 WHEREAS, he served Governor Barnett during the first
61 legislative session until July 1960, and played a vital role in
62 the passage of some of the most progressive economic development
63 legislation passed in Mississippi. He was then appointed as
64 Executive Director of the Mississippi Employment Security
65 Commission, and served in this position for 18 years under five
66 Governors, longer than any other person, and retired in March
67 1978; and

68 WHEREAS, in all, he had over 38 years of total public service
69 in all three branches of state government; and

70 WHEREAS, upon leaving government service, he went back into
71 the practice of law on a limited basis, serving as Of Counsel to
72 his son Ron at Aldridge Law Offices in Jackson. He was a member
73 of the Montgomery County, Hinds County and Mississippi Bar
74 Associations, and had previously served as Second Vice President
75 (1948) and as a Commissioner (1959) of The Mississippi Bar; and

76 WHEREAS, always looking out for the best interests of all
77 Mississippi governmental retirees, in 1984 he was one of the
78 principal organizers and spokespersons of the Mississippi Retired
79 Public Employee's Association. He served as its President in 1989
80 and was a Life Member of its Board of Directors. He and a handful
81 of other key leaders are credited with the statewide campaign that
82 overwhelmingly passed a state Constitutional Amendment protecting
83 the state retiree Trust Fund and with legislation preserving the
84 "thirteenth check"; and

85 WHEREAS, he was involved in numerous organizations, including
86 Jefferson Davis Beauvoir Shrine Board of Directors and former Camp
87 Commander of the Jefferson Davis Camp 635, Sons of Confederate
88 Veterans; and

89 WHEREAS, self-described as one of the most important parts of
90 his life, he served as a Deacon and Teacher of Men's Bible classes
91 in the Winona and Jackson First Baptist Churches. His Sunday
92 School teaching extended over a 50-year period and his commitment

93 and desire to attend Sunday School and Church services continued
94 up until the last days of his life; and

95 WHEREAS, survivors are his wife of over 69 years, Jean Butt
96 Aldridge, and their three sons, Dr. John E. (Jack) Aldridge, Jr.,
97 and wife Nancy of Brandon; Franklin B. Aldridge of Ridgeland; and
98 Ronald H. (Ron) Aldridge and wife Beth of Jackson; five
99 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; and

100 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this
101 public servant whose integrity, friendship and life was a
102 testimony of his commitment to his family, his church and to the
103 State of Mississippi:

104 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
105 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
106 we do hereby commend the life and legacy of former legislator John
107 E. "Johnny" Aldridge of Jackson and Winona, Mississippi, and
108 express to his surviving family the sympathy of the Legislature on
109 his passing.

110 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
111 the surviving family of Johnny Aldridge and be made available to
112 the Capitol Press Corps.