

By: Senator(s) Burton, Butler (38th),
Carmichael, Frazier, Hopson, Jackson (11th),
Jackson (32nd), Lee, Montgomery, Norwood,
Simmons (12th), Simmons (13th), Stone

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 554

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND PAYING TRIBUTE
2 TO THE JUDICIAL, PUBLIC AND MILITARY SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP OF
3 FORMER MISSISSIPPI SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE ROY NOBLE LEE.

4 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we learned of the passing of
5 former Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Noble Lee at
6 the age of 99. Chief Justice Lee served 16 years on the Supreme
7 Court; and

8 WHEREAS, Justice Lee came from a family of judges. He and
9 his father, Percy Mercer Lee, are the only father and son ever to
10 serve as Chief Justices of the Mississippi Supreme Court. Percy
11 Mercer Lee served on the Supreme Court from 1950-1965. Roy Noble
12 Lee is the brother of Senior Judge Tom S. Lee of the U.S. District
13 Court for the Southern District of Mississippi; and

14 WHEREAS, former Governor Cliff Finch appointed Lee to a
15 vacancy on the Supreme Court on March 8, 1976. Justice Lee was
16 elected to a full term on the court later that year, and was
17 reelected in 1984. He became Chief Justice on October 1, 1987,



18 and retired at the end of his term on January 4, 1993, after 16
19 years of service; and

20 WHEREAS, Justice Lee's public service career spanned 50
21 years. From 1942-1944, he worked as an F.B.I. agent. He joined
22 the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1944, saw battle in the South Pacific,
23 and was honorably discharged May 4, 1946. He followed in his
24 father's footsteps as District Attorney and Circuit Judge. From
25 1951 to January 1964, he was District Attorney for the 8th
26 Judicial District. He served as Circuit Judge from the same
27 district from January 1, 1975, to March 8, 1976; and

28 WHEREAS, Roy Noble Lee was born on October 19, 1915, in
29 Madison County, Mississippi. He graduated from Mississippi
30 College in 1938, and in 1939 earned an LL.B. degree from
31 Cumberland University School of Law. He was admitted to The
32 Mississippi Bar in 1939; and

33 WHEREAS, Chief Justice Bill Waller, Jr., said Chief Justice
34 Lee's impact on the judicial branch of government was enormous.
35 Some of the most significant advancements for the judicial branch
36 of government during the 20th Century were implemented under his
37 leadership. He gave leadership to the enactment of legislation
38 that created the Administrative Office of Courts and the Court of
39 Appeals. The Court of Appeals, as he predicted, has been an
40 excellent solution to allow timely disposition of cases and
41 eliminate the backlog that had long plagued the Appellate Court.
42 The Court of Appeals began hearing cases in January 1995. The



43 Intermediate Appellate Court hears cases assigned by the Supreme
44 Court; and

45 WHEREAS, Judge Lee wrote eloquently of that love of the
46 outdoors in a 1982 Supreme Court Opinion that rejected a challenge
47 by a group of hunters to a Mississippi Commission on Wildlife
48 Conservation rule that prohibited use of dogs in deer hunting in
49 parts of the state. Justice Lee's often quoted passage from the
50 case known as Strong v. Bostick says, "Many men, including this
51 writer, feel that a person who has never seen squirrels jump from
52 limb to limb in the deep swamp on a frosty fall morning; or has
53 never heard a wild turkey gobble in April or seen him strut during
54 mating season; or has never watched a deer bound through the woods
55 and fields, or heard a pack of hounds run a fox, or tree a coon
56 (raccoon); or has never hunted the rabbit, or flushed a covey of
57 quail ahead of a pointed bird dog; or has never angled for bass or
58 caught bream on a light line and rod, or taken catfish from a
59 trotline and limb hook; has never lived. Present generations owe
60 posterity the obligation to protect and conserve wildlife, a
61 valuable and essential natural resource, in order that future
62 generations may have game and fish for their enjoyment, pleasure
63 and benefit"; and

64 WHEREAS, Justice Lee served as a leader and mentor and
65 consistently lectured on professional standards of the practice,
66 including ethics, integrity, civility, courtesy and adherence to



67 the Golden Rule. His life honored both The Mississippi Bar and
68 this Great State that he loved and served:

69 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
70 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
71 we do hereby mourn the loss and pay tribute to the judicial public
72 and military service and leadership of former Mississippi Supreme
73 Court Chief Justice Roy Noble Lee, and extend to his surviving
74 family the condolences of the Mississippi Legislature.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
76 the surviving family of Chief Justice Lee, the Clerk of the
77 Mississippi Supreme Court, the Executive Director of The
78 Mississippi Bar, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

