

By: Representative Lamar

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 123

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE HEROIC
2 AND INSPIRATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF PATRICK HARDISON WHILE IN THE
3 LINE OF DUTY AND DURING THE MOST EXTENSIVE FACE TRANSPLANT SURGERY
4 PERFORMED TO DATE.

5 WHEREAS, Patrick Hardison, a 41-year-old volunteer
6 firefighter from Senatobia, Mississippi, embodies all of the
7 characteristics of a true hero -- intrepidity, valor, prowess,
8 gallantry, bravery, courage and fortitude -- characteristics that
9 he possessed before the fateful day in 2001 that stole his essence
10 and before he endured the 26-hour surgery on August 14, 2015, to
11 attempt to return a bit of normalcy to his life; and

12 WHEREAS, as a firefighter, Patrick faced dangerous, deadly
13 situations that demanded he put his life on the line every time
14 the bell rang, and September 5, 2001, was no different as he
15 fearlessly and bravely rushed into a scorching house consumed with
16 flames that reached broiling temperatures to rescue a trapped
17 woman, but only moments after courageously entering, the roof
18 suddenly collapsed, knocking off his helmet and melting the mask
19 that protected his face; and



20 WHEREAS, miraculously, the doctors were able to save his
21 life, but not his face, as his eyelids, ears, lips, most of his
22 nose, most of his vision and his hair became victims of the torrid
23 inferno, which also caused disfiguring third-degree burns across
24 his entire head, neck and upper torso, changing not only his
25 outward appearance but his entire life; and

26 WHEREAS, the 27-year-old father of three returned home to
27 Senatobia after a 63-day stay in a burn center in Memphis,
28 Tennessee, and while he tried to return to the regular hustle and
29 bustle of his pre-accident life, he realized that was an
30 impossible feat, as he could not look in a mirror without
31 grimacing or attend a baseball game or other social gathering
32 without becoming the object of everyone's stares; and

33 WHEREAS, despite having a face that was "one huge scar,"
34 Patrick tried to remain in good spirits, playfully explaining to
35 curious children that he was injured in a fight with a bear, but
36 even his best efforts at acceptance could not prevent the dark
37 times he endured for 14 years, as more than 70 surgeries involving
38 multiple skin grafts from his leg to his face were unable to
39 return any "semblance of normal anatomy" to the otherwise normal
40 man, who hid behind sunglasses and a baseball cap whenever he
41 ventured outdoors; and

42 WHEREAS, resigned to the fact that his face would forever be
43 the focus of concern, questions and ogles, a church friend would
44 not accept that future for Patrick and contacted Dr. Eduardo



45 Rodriguez, an internationally recognized plastic surgeon who had
46 performed a face transplant surgery in 2012, and after examining
47 Patrick, Dr. Rodriguez realized that the traits that make a
48 perfect candidate for a face transplant, which are courage,
49 commitment and responsibility, exuded from Patrick's core, so he
50 made him his patient and placed him on the face transplant waiting
51 list in August 2014; and

52 WHEREAS, once Patrick was on the waiting list, Dr. Rodriguez
53 began looking for the ideal candidate, someone who matched
54 Patrick's biological traits to minimize the risk that his body
55 would reject the new tissue as well as similarities in skin, hair
56 color, weight and size, and after the tragic death of
57 free-spirited, 26-year-old, Brooklyn artist and bicycle enthusiast
58 David P. Rodebaugh, the doctor knew the time had come for Patrick
59 to begin a new normal with a new face; and

60 WHEREAS, Rodebaugh was an organ donor, and his mother,
61 remembering that her son had always wanted to be a firefighter,
62 gave permission for the doctors to use her baby boy's face to
63 complete the groundbreaking surgery, which required Patrick to
64 undergo a multitude of physical and psychological tests before
65 participating in an experimental surgery that only touted a
66 survival rate of 50 percent; and

67 WHEREAS, on August 14, 2015, a team of nearly 100 medical
68 professionals with Dr. Rodriguez at the helm began the most
69 extensive face transplant surgery ever by removing David's scalp



70 and face, including his eyelids, and attaching them to Patrick's
71 face, connecting the blood vessels, shaping the nose and chin and
72 replacing Patrick's eyelids and the muscles within that control
73 blinking, and as Patrick's new face, particularly his new lips and
74 ears, became robust with color as he laid on the operating table,
75 Dr. Rodriguez knew the surgery would be successful; and

76 WHEREAS, the world's most extensive face transplant surgery
77 lasted 26 hours and cost between \$850,000 and \$1,000,000, but the
78 unforgettable feeling the firefighter and father of five
79 experienced when not a single person gave him a second glance when
80 he left his hospital room in New York to go shopping at Macy's was
81 absolutely priceless, causing both doctor and patient to be
82 overcome with a flood of emotions upon the realization that the
83 surgery was a huge success, Patrick would become an average Joe
84 again, and Dr. Rodriguez now had the wherewithal and experience to
85 help dozens of other similarly situated individuals enjoy life
86 anew; and

87 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to pay tribute
88 to fine, heroic Mississippians such as Patrick Hardison, whose
89 dauntless fortitude and unwavering courage remain steadfast
90 despite life's obstacles, motivating and inspiring the Senatobia
91 community and the people of the great State of Mississippi:

92 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
93 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
94 THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize and commend the heroic and



95 inspirational achievements of Patrick Hardison while in the line
96 of duty and during the most extensive face transplant surgery to
97 date, and extend our most sincere wishes for continued success in
98 all of his future endeavors.

99 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
100 furnished to Patrick Hardison and to the members of the Capitol
101 Press Corps.

