

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Jackson (11th),
Butler, Turner, Tollison, Simmons (13th),
Jackson (15th), Horhn, Frazier, Wilemon,
Polk, Norwood, Watson, Doty, Younger,
Wiggins, Barnett, Blackmon, Browning,
Dawkins, Hopson, Jackson (32nd), Witherspoon,
Stone, Blount, Burton, Dearing, Fillingane,
McDaniel, Parker, Simmons (12th)

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 595

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE DISTINGUISHED LEGAL
2 CAREER OF JUDGE HENRY T. WINGATE, UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
3 JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI, THE FIRST
4 AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEDERAL JUDGE AND THE YOUNGEST FEDERAL JUDGE EVER
5 APPOINTED IN MISSISSIPPI.

6 WHEREAS, in honor of Black History Month we recognize United
7 States District Court Judge Henry T. Wingate, the first
8 African-American Federal Judge ever appointed in the history of
9 the State of Mississippi; and

10 WHEREAS, Judge Henry T. Wingate was born January 6, 1947, in
11 Jackson, Mississippi. He attended Brinkley Junior-Senior High
12 School of Jackson, Mississippi, and graduated among the top of his
13 class in June 1965. During high school, he lettered in baseball
14 and basketball. He was selected for the State All-Star Basketball
15 Team and was elected Co-Captain; and

16 WHEREAS, following high school, Judge Wingate attended
17 Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa, identified by *Newsweek Magazine*
18 in 2004 as the best overall college or university in the nation.
19 There, he majored in Philosophy, accumulating a 3.65 in that



20 discipline. He was Co-Captain of the varsity basketball team and
21 very active in college organizations, especially theatre, where he
22 starred in various productions, one of which was a two-man
23 performance widely acclaimed as the best theatre production of
24 four years. He graduated in 1969 with a Bachelor of Arts degree;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, Judge Wingate acquired his Juris Doctorate degree
27 from Yale Law School, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut,
28 universally acclaimed as the number one law school in the nation.
29 While a student at the Yale Law School, Judge Wingate worked part
30 time for the New Haven Legal Service Office. He was among the
31 first law students in the State of Connecticut to be certified to
32 practice before lower state courts as a third-year law student.
33 Also, while at Yale Law School, Judge Wingate was named as one of
34 few recipients of a national, competitive fellowship from the Law
35 Students Civil Rights Research Organization of New York, New York,
36 which subsidized summer study of Civil Rights issues at a law firm
37 of Judge Wingate's choosing. He was admitted to The Mississippi
38 Bar in 1973; and

39 WHEREAS, from July 1973 until September 1976, Judge Wingate
40 served as Lieutenant with the Judge Advocate General's Corps,
41 United States Navy, at Naval Legal Services Office, Norfolk,
42 Virginia. He was assigned principally to the Criminal Division
43 where he both prosecuted on behalf of the government, represented
44 military accused before all military courts, and served on



45 military selection boards. From 1973 to 1975, Judge Wingate was
46 the only African-American lawyer in the entire United States Navy,
47 a circumstance which required Judge Wingate to dialogue with the
48 highest ranking Naval officers on matters of race, while still
49 charged with handling the most challenging caseload of any Naval
50 lawyer on the East Coast; and

51 WHEREAS, in October 1976, Judge Wingate joined the staff of
52 the Attorney General for the State of Mississippi. The first
53 African-American lawyer to be hired in the office, he was
54 variously assigned to the Criminal Appellate Division, the State
55 Court Division, and to the Federal Litigation Division. Pursuant
56 to these assignments, he handled an extensive criminal appellate
57 practice and appeared often in state and federal courts on civil
58 matters. In January 1980, Judge Wingate left the Attorney
59 General's Office and began employment as State District Attorney
60 for Hinds and Yazoo Counties. Judge Wingate was the first
61 full-time African-American hiree. In charge of the prosecution of
62 violent crimes (capital murder, murder, robbery, rape, kidnapping,
63 etc.), Judge Wingate appeared regularly in trials before juries.
64 Next, Judge Wingate accepted employment with the United States
65 Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Mississippi. He
66 was the first African-American lawyer hired in that office. As an
67 Assistant United States Attorney, he prosecuted the major crimes,
68 and his duties involved extensive trial work; and



69 WHEREAS, Judge Wingate's teaching experience is considerable.
70 He is an Adjunct Professor at Mississippi College School of Law
71 where he has taught Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Military
72 Law, Trial Practice and Procedure, and Complex Litigation; and has
73 served as an Adjunct Professor at Jackson State University;
74 lecturer on the national faculty of National College of District
75 Attorneys (NCDA); lecturer with the Mississippi Judicial College;
76 lecturer with the Mississippi Prosecutors' College; and lecturer
77 for the Mississippi State Bar Review. In constant demand as a
78 speaker, Judge Wingate has lectured regularly at District Court
79 Judges' Workshops; United States Bankruptcy Judges' Seminars;
80 Bench-Bar Conferences, as well as having served as Commencement
81 Speaker at a number of academic institutions, including Alcorn
82 State University and Coahoma Junior College; and

83 WHEREAS, Judge Wingate was recommended to the federal bench
84 in December 1984 by Senator Thad Cochran and appointed by the
85 President in October 1985, after confirmation by the United States
86 Senate. The first African-American Federal Judge ever appointed
87 in the history of Mississippi, Judge Wingate, at 38 years of age
88 when appointed, also became Mississippi's youngest Federal Judge
89 ever appointed; and

90 WHEREAS, on November 4, 2003, Judge Wingate became Chief
91 Judge of the Southern District of Mississippi and served in that
92 position for a term of seven years. As Chief Judge, Judge Wingate
93 presided over a court of six active District Judges, six Senior



94 District Judges, five Magistrate Judges, and three Bankruptcy
95 Judges. He approved budgets, appointed committees, while various
96 department heads, including Clerk of Court, Bankruptcy, and Parole
97 and Probation, all reported to him. His task was to ensure a
98 cohesive, smooth operation of the court family for the Southern
99 District of Mississippi, which embraces 45 counties of the State
100 of Mississippi, over half the state. The Southern District of
101 Mississippi has courthouses in Jackson, Meridian, Hattiesburg,
102 Natchez and Gulfport; and

103 WHEREAS, in the Winter 2006 issue of *Lawdragon*, a national
104 publication, Judge Wingate is named as one of the leading 500
105 trial and appellate judges in America. Judge Wingate has received
106 many honors and recognitions. On May 19, 1986, Grinnell College
107 of Grinnell, Iowa, bestowed upon him a coveted honorary Doctor of
108 Laws degree. On May 16, 2004, Tougaloo College of Tougaloo,
109 Mississippi, bestowed upon Judge Wingate an honorary Doctor of
110 Laws degree. On May 13, 2011, Mississippi College of Clinton,
111 Mississippi, bestowed upon Judge Wingate an honorary Doctor of
112 Laws degree; and

113 WHEREAS, Judge Wingate's picture and brief biography are
114 featured in a permanent exhibition on the life and legacy of
115 Medgar Evers at the Jackson, Mississippi, International Airport,
116 showing the racial progress of Mississippi since Medgar's
117 assassination; and



118 WHEREAS, Judge Wingate has served as President of the United
119 States District Judges Association for the Fifth Circuit, that is,
120 all district judges in the States of Mississippi, Louisiana and
121 Texas. Previously, he served as President-Elect, Vice President,
122 and before that, as Secretary/Treasurer of that organization.
123 From 1994 to 1999, Judge Wingate served as a member of the
124 Judicial Resources Committee under the Judicial Conference of the
125 United States. Judge Wingate serves on the Pattern Criminal Jury
126 Instruction Committee for the Fifth Circuit. Judge Wingate, over
127 12 years ago, created his Federal Court-Watch Program. This free
128 program, financed entirely by Judge Wingate, has several
129 components: (1) a summer session for high school and college
130 students which focuses upon careers in law and law enforcement;
131 (2) a GospelFest, a musical presentation by members of the
132 Mississippi Mass Choir and others, aimed at uplifting the
133 spiritual mood of the prisoners at the Yazoo Federal Penitentiary,
134 Yazoo City, Mississippi; (3) a VIP Tour for juveniles and adults
135 of the living, educational, correctional facilities of the Yazoo
136 Federal Penitentiary; and (4) a Law School Admissions Test (LSAT)
137 review and lecture on law schools for those who are interested in
138 attending law school; and

139 WHEREAS, Judge Wingate was married to the late Turner Arnita
140 (Ward) for 34 years. She was a former State Racquetball Champion,
141 a former State Bowling Champion, and a respected educator, having
142 taught in high school and college; and



143 WHEREAS, Judge Wingate is a leader and mentor in the legal
144 profession, who has lectured on the professional standards of the
145 practice including ethics, integrity, civility, courtesy, and
146 adherence to the Golden Rule. Judge Wingate's career has honored
147 The Mississippi Bar and Bench and this great state that he has
148 served:

149 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
150 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
151 we do hereby recognize the distinguished legal career of Judge
152 Henry T. Wingate, United States District Court Judge for the
153 Southern District of Mississippi, the first African-American
154 Federal Judge and the youngest Federal Judge ever appointed in
155 Mississippi.

156 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
157 Judge Wingate, forwarded to The Mississippi Bar and the Judicial
158 Conference of the United States, and made available to the Capitol
159 Press Corps.

