

By: Representative Sanford

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 50

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE COURAGE AND BRAVERY  
2 OF REVEREND RODNEY DUKE AND COMMENDING HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE  
3 IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY, AND HIS SERVICE AS A MINISTER OF THE  
4 METHODIST FAITH.

5 WHEREAS, Reverend Rodney Duke has distinguished himself as  
6 both a minister of the Methodist faith, and as a fearless  
7 serviceman during his assignment on the U.S.S. Pueblo in the  
8 United States Navy; and

9 WHEREAS, born in Alabama on November 2, 1942, Reverend Duke,  
10 the only son of a Baptist minister, was one of seven children; and

11 WHEREAS, Reverend Duke moved with his family to Mississippi  
12 at the age of 19, and he graduated from Hinds Junior College with  
13 a degree in electronics; and

14 WHEREAS, after enlisting in the United States Navy in 1965,  
15 Reverend Duke was trained as a communications technician, and was  
16 one of 82 men assigned to the U.S.S. Pueblo, an electronic  
17 intelligence gathering ship; and

18 WHEREAS, on January 23, 1968, during Reverend Duke's first  
19 patrol of the ship, the U.S.S. Pueblo was attacked by North Korean



20 forces, with one of the crewmembers perishing during the attack;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, for over two hours, the U.S.S. Pueblo stealthily  
23 maneuvered to prevent the North Koreans from invading the ship;  
24 nevertheless, Reverend Duke and his 80 remaining crewmates were  
25 captured by North Korean Communist forces; and

26 WHEREAS, Reverend Duke and his crewmates were held as  
27 prisoners of the North Korean Communist forces for 11 brutal and  
28 excruciatingly difficult months; and

29 WHEREAS, while a prisoner of the North Koreans, Reverend Duke  
30 endured cruel, physically abusive and tortuous treatment, which  
31 left him with permanent disabilities; and

32 WHEREAS, during his capture, Reverend Duke resolved that if  
33 he were to survive and gain his freedom from the North Koreans,  
34 upon returning home, he would become a minister, and from that  
35 time, he steadfastly served his fellow prisoners to the best of  
36 his abilities; and

37 WHEREAS, on December 23, 1968, exactly 11 months from the  
38 date of being captured as prisoners, Reverend Duke and his  
39 crewmates were released by the North Korean Communist forces; and

40 WHEREAS, after returning home to Mississippi, Reverend Duke  
41 became a minister in the Methodist Church, just as he had decided  
42 during his time as a prisoner of the North Koreans, and he married  
43 the former Alice Chesser of Jackson, Mississippi, and they are the  
44 parents of two sons; and



45 WHEREAS, Reverend Duke also resumed his education, returning  
46 to Hinds Junior College for a year, attending Millsaps College,  
47 and subsequently attending Belhaven College, where he ultimately  
48 earned his bachelor's degree; and

49 WHEREAS, a priceless contributor to his community, Reverend  
50 Duke has served for several decades as a pastor of the Methodist  
51 faith in numerous cities throughout Mississippi, and now resides  
52 in Collins, Mississippi; and

53 WHEREAS, Reverend Duke's enduring courage, bravery and  
54 tenacity reflect and uphold the noble traditions of the United  
55 States Navy, and his unwavering faith and conviction reflect and  
56 uphold the beliefs of the Methodist faith; and

57 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to honor heroic  
58 Mississippians such as Reverend Rodney Duke for his dauntless  
59 fortitude and his remarkable dedication to the United States of  
60 America and the people of the State of Mississippi, who are  
61 eternally appreciative, for without people like Reverend Duke, the  
62 freedom they know and love would not be possible:

63 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
64 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING  
65 THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize the courage and bravery of  
66 Reverend Rodney Duke and commend his distinguished service in the  
67 United States Navy, and his service as a minister of the Methodist  
68 faith, on behalf of this great nation.



69           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
70 furnished to Reverend Rodney Duke and to the members of the  
71 Capitol Press Corps.

