

By: Senator(s) Frazier, Horhn, Norwood,
Simmons (12th), Blackmon, Blount, Butler,
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To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 580

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND SALUTING THE ARTISTS,
2 PRODUCERS AND ENGINEERS OF LEGENDARY JACKSON-BASED SOUL MUSIC
3 PIONEERS "MALACO RECORDS" ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR 50TH
4 ANNIVERSARY IN THE RECORDING INDUSTRY.

5 WHEREAS, a Mississippi Blues Trail Marker stands at the gate
6 of the recording studio that was founded on Northside Drive in
7 1967, and remains the home of Malaco Records, sharing the story of
8 one of the foremost labels in Southern Soul, Blues and Gospel
9 Music; and

10 WHEREAS, known as "The Last Soul Company," Malaco has
11 survived in a tumultuous, fickle field by catering to a passionate
12 niche audience rather than chasing hits and trends. Malaco, Inc.,
13 was officially created a year after the studio building opened.
14 Details aren't set, but plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary
15 include special vinyl releases, a coffee table photo book, a
16 gospel celebration concert, and other events throughout the year;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Malaco's struggles, as well as its successes, are
19 part of the legacy. The seeds for Malaco were set at Ole Miss,



20 where Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity brothers Tommy Couch, Sr., and
21 Wolf Stephenson booked bands for dances. Later in Jackson, Couch
22 and brother-in-law, Mitchell Malouf, started Malaco Attractions.
23 Stephenson joined them in concert promotion, and the recording
24 studio followed. Music was the focus. They recorded just about
25 anything at the outset and at some point, a favorite thread became
26 a direction: the Rhythm and Blues, Soul Music, whatever the name
27 was at the time; and

28 WHEREAS, prompted by another studio's success with Delta
29 Blues, Stephenson suggested recording Fred McDowell. The McDowell
30 sessions were released to Capitol Records, and his album was
31 nominated for a Grammy, scoring Malaco a bit of national
32 attention. Jingles, concert promotions, band booking and studio
33 rental were the studio's mainstay, but in 1970, New Orleans
34 Producer-Arranger Wardell Quezergue, who had artists and songs,
35 needed a studio, musicians and funds to record. A week of
36 recording music tracks and a marathon weekend of recording
37 artists, who traveled from New Orleans in a borrowed school bus,
38 paid off. "When he put it on the radio, it just exploded,"
39 Stephenson said. Atlantic called and made a deal for
40 distribution. The Malaco crew scrambled to finish an album to
41 follow. Stax Records released King Floyd's "Groove Me" and Jean
42 Knight's "Mr. Big Stuff," which also blasted off. "'Groove Me'
43 and 'Mr. Big Stuff' sold approximately two million copies each,"
44 Couch said. The Pointer Sisters from Atlantic, Rufus Thomas and



45 others from Stax Records and, in 1973, Paul Simon (for "There Goes
46 Rhymin' Simon"), all recorded at Malaco; and

47 WHEREAS, the fire was lit, but it started fading around 1974.
48 Then they recorded Dorothy Moore's "Misty Blue." "Misty Blue" was
49 an R&B and pop hit, selling more than two million records and
50 earning a Grammy nomination. Moore earned another for "I Believe
51 You." Fern Kinney's mid-tempo "Together We Are Beautiful" hit big
52 in England, then other countries in Europe. A disco remake of
53 "Groove Me" was successful, too. Writer/Producer Frederick Knight
54 brought Anita Ward to Malaco in 1979 to record. Stewart Madison
55 joined the company in 1979 as Director of Business Affairs, while
56 Couch and Stephenson focused on the creative end. Pioneering
57 African-American Promoter Dave Clark, well-respected in black
58 radio circles, was hired in 1980 and was instrumental in bringing
59 Z.Z. Hill and others to Malaco; and

60 WHEREAS, Z.Z. Hill's "Down Home Blues" broke the mold on
61 blues at the time. It signaled recognition of a market for
62 old-style blues and soul music, which had become a subgenre of R&B
63 with Malaco, the leader in the field. Artists Z.Z. Hill (until
64 his 1984 death), Denise LaSalle, Latimore, Little Milton Campbell,
65 Johnnie Taylor, Bobby Blue Bland, Shirley Brown and Tyrone Davis,
66 key Songwriters, and the house band's Soulful Grooves cemented
67 Malaco's dominance in Southern R&B, Blues and Soul. At the same
68 time, since 1975, they produced gospel music. The Jackson
69 Southernaires' and Malaco Gospel Director Frank Williams had the



70 same effect on the African-American gospel artists. Almost all of
71 them came because of him. Williams also founded the Mississippi
72 Mass Choir; and

73 WHEREAS, "That's the other piece of 'The Last Soul Company'
74 title," said Tommy Couch, Jr., who joined the company in 1992.
75 "Malaco wasn't trying to be anything else. It was just
76 concentrating on what it did really well"; and

77 WHEREAS, when an April 2011 tornado destroyed most of
78 Malaco's offices and studio, 44 years' worth of experiences were
79 gone in 44 seconds. About 20 people on the property escaped
80 injury. Thanks to a tape vault built to withstand a tornado, so
81 did the masters. It brought an opportunity to get ready for the
82 coming decades. The fact that these entrepreneurs were talented
83 enough to make great records and smart enough to understand the
84 business is why Malaco is still here and actually thriving; and

85 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we join the Mississippi
86 Music Industry in celebrating this landmark event in the history
87 of Mississippi music:

88 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
89 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
90 we do hereby recognize and salute the Artists, Producers and
91 Engineers of legendary Jackson-based Soul Music Pioneers "Malaco
92 Records" on the occasion of their 50th Anniversary in the
93 recording industry, and extend our best wishes to these "soul
94 survivors" for future success.



95 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
96 the owners of Malaco Records, forwarded to the Mississippi Arts
97 Commission, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

