

By: Senator(s) Hill, Dearing, Jackson (32nd) To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 593

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE ARTISTIC TALENT OF
2 COLUMBIA, MISSISSIPPI, ARTIST BEN WATTS, WHOSE LATEST COMMISSIONED
3 MONUMENT IS "THE GREAT PHYSICIAN" STATUE AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE
4 WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE.

5 WHEREAS, on January 11, 2018, William Carey University
6 unveiled the "The Great Physician" statue at the entrance to its
7 College of Osteopathic Medicine. Artist Ben Watts of Columbia,
8 Mississippi, created the sculpture at the request of Dr. Tommy
9 King and Judge Charles Pickering who wanted a healing Jesus
10 sculpture at the medical school; and

11 WHEREAS, exhibiting artistic talent as early as primary
12 school when he won his first art contest, Ben Watts began his life
13 in art. During his teenage years, he pursued photography by
14 building his own darkroom and continued studying that medium
15 throughout his college years at Millsaps College in Jackson,
16 Mississippi. He also studied drawing and painting, preferring his
17 art classes to the ones necessary to earn his BBA in Accounting,
18 in preparation to return home to Columbia to join his father and
19 uncle in the family retail business in 1980; and



20 WHEREAS, in 1997, Ben discovered his gift for the medium of
21 sculpture; and in 2000, chose to follow his lifelong aspiration of
22 pursuing art as his full-time career. Since then, Ben has
23 nurtured his gift by studying with some of the most recognized
24 sculptors in America. These include: Cowboy Artists, Mehl Lawson
25 and Grant Speed, and Premier Portrait Artist, Blair Buswell. Ben
26 has shown his work in galleries and art shows all over the country
27 from Scottsdale, Arizona, to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, to Lakeland,
28 Florida, and has won numerous awards for his work; and

29 WHEREAS, Ben creates original wildlife, western and
30 figurative works, as well as commissioned monuments and bronze
31 portraits. His commissioned portraits include: NFL great Walter
32 Payton; United States Senator Howell Heflin of Alabama; an 11-foot
33 monument to the memory of legendary Archer Fred Bear for the
34 Wonders of Wildlife Museum at Bass Pro Shops' Springfield,
35 Missouri, facility; and a larger-than-life John Wesley, founder of
36 the Methodist Church, for Millsaps College. Ben has proudly
37 accepted commissions from several higher education institutions
38 around South Mississippi; in recent years, installing a monument
39 of Coach Dobie Holden on the campus of Pearl River Community
40 College in Poplarville, Mississippi; a beautiful eagle sculpture
41 for the Alumni Association at the University of Southern
42 Mississippi, and a portrait of William Carey for William Carey
43 University. He recently finished a portrait of Coach Bull
44 Sullivan for East Mississippi Community College in Scooba,



45 Mississippi. Ben's work studio is in Columbia, where he is
46 associated with the Columbia Artists Co-Operative and its
47 Artwistic Revolution Gallery; and

48 WHEREAS, in June 2017, Ricky Scaggs and Brad Paisley unveiled
49 Ben Watts' Bluegrass legend Bill Monroe and Little Jimmy Dickens
50 at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville; and

51 WHEREAS, Watts said most traditional art, whether painting or
52 sculpture, captures a moment in time with the viewer having to
53 determine what is transpiring, what has transpired, or what is
54 about to transpire. In "The Great Physician," two men are seen:
55 one has just been healed of blindness and the other is a cripple,
56 not yet healed. "It is up to the viewer to believe in the healing
57 power of Jesus and to ask the question of whether Jesus will heal
58 the cripple," said Watts. "It was my aim to put into a permanent
59 record those verses in Matthew which say that Jesus healed the
60 blind and the lame. My aim was also to convey two thoughts: one
61 to show the power of Jesus healing and the other the hope of
62 Jesus's presence"; and

63 WHEREAS, we join William Carey University in saluting the
64 outstanding talent of a Mississippi artist whose national and
65 international work is bringing honor to the artistic traditions of
66 the State of Mississippi:

67 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
68 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
69 we do hereby recognize the artistic talent of Columbia,



70 Mississippi, Artist Ben Watts whose latest commissioned monument
71 is "The Great Physician" statue at the entrance to the William
72 Carey University College of Osteopathic Medicine, and extend our
73 best wishes to Ben and his family for future success.

74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
75 Ben Watts, forwarded to the President of William Carey University
76 and the Mississippi Arts Commission, and made available to the
77 Capitol Press Corps.

