

By: Senator(s) Bryan, Blount, Burton

To: Rules

## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 658

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE PASSING OF PROMINENT  
2 MISSISSIPPI JOURNALIST WAYNE SIMS "JOE" RUTHERFORD, RECOGNIZING  
3 HIS LEGACY AND EXTENDING THE CONDOLENCES OF THE LEGISLATURE TO HIS  
4 FAMILY.

5 WHEREAS, it is with extreme sadness that we share the news  
6 that Wayne Sims "Joe" Rutherford passed away on December 26, 2017.  
7 Joe was one of Mississippi's most prominent Journalists and was a  
8 leading light in our state. Joe Rutherford's editorial voice  
9 helped define the Northeast Mississippi *Daily Journal's* mission  
10 and leadership role for four decades. He was 69; and

11 WHEREAS, Rutherford, who as a small child chose to have  
12 himself called Joe, enjoyed a career with the *Daily Journal* that  
13 spanned 44 years, most of that time as Editorial Page Editor after  
14 stints as a Reporter and Managing Editor. From the early 1980s  
15 until his retirement at the end of 2016, Joe wrote most of the  
16 unsigned opinions that represented the *Daily Journal's*  
17 institutional viewpoint; and

18 WHEREAS, his editorials on education, transportation and  
19 other critical issues influenced many public policy debates at the



20 local, regional and state levels through the years. He was widely  
21 admired across the political spectrum as a knowledgeable and  
22 fair-minded writer; and

23 WHEREAS, in addition to his role as an Award-Winning  
24 Journalist, Joe was a mentor to countless young journalists and a  
25 dear and loyal friend to many, both at the newspaper and in the  
26 wider Tupelo and Northeast Mississippi community. For many years  
27 he was the institutional memory of the *Daily Journal* and the go-to  
28 person for his friends and colleagues when they wanted to know  
29 more about any person or place related to the area. His memory  
30 was astounding and he loved to recount the details for a willing  
31 audience; and

32 WHEREAS, Joe's life was grounded in a profound faith. He had  
33 a deep interest in theology and its implications for both public  
34 and private life. Born February 12, 1948, in Corinth, he was the  
35 only child of Lora Sims Rutherford and Odell Rutherford. He  
36 graduated from Ripley High School and was especially proud of a  
37 brief time he studied at Oxford, England. He also was a loyal and  
38 stout supporter of his alma mater, the University of Mississippi;  
39 and

40 WHEREAS, the child of educators, Joe had a keen interest in  
41 the state of education for Mississippi's children and staunchly  
42 supported many efforts to improve and more fully fund the state's  
43 public school system. He won numerous honors for news and feature  
44 writing. In addition to writing daily editorials, Joe, who once



45 considered attending seminary, took great care in crafting  
46 religious-themed opinions in Saturday's editions. He enjoyed  
47 talking about his longtime associations with iconic Journal  
48 Leaders George and Anna Keirseay McLean, as well as Tupelo  
49 visionary Jack Reed, Sr., and took their community development  
50 tenets to heart about the future of his home region; and

51 WHEREAS, a devoted member of First Presbyterian Church in  
52 Tupelo, Joe taught Sunday School and for many years was active on  
53 the Hospitality Committee, especially in organizing events and  
54 cooking food for them. He was an Eagle Scout and a dedicated  
55 supporter of the Scouting Movement; and

56 WHEREAS, in addition to his friend Jim High, Joe is survived  
57 by first cousins: Ann Heard Downing of Dunwoody, Georgia; Mickey  
58 Rutherford of Meridian; and Mevelyn Baxter of Hernando; and a  
59 goddaughter, Margaret Bardwell McDaniel of New Orleans, Louisiana;  
60 and

61 WHEREAS, Joe Rutherford's life made a difference through the  
62 editorials he wrote influencing opinion not only in Northeast  
63 Mississippi, but throughout the state; and we pay tribute and  
64 cherish fondly the memory of this most public-spirited citizen and  
65 Journalist of Mississippi who will be missed:

66 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
67 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That  
68 we do hereby mourn the passing of prominent Mississippi Journalist



69 Wayne Sims "Joe" Rutherford, recognizing his legacy and extending  
70 the condolences of the Legislature to his family.

71 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
72 the surviving family of Joe Rutherford forwarded to the Editor of  
73 the *Tupelo Daily Journal*, and made available to the Capitol Press  
74 Corps.

