

By: Representatives Straughter, Hines, Bell      To: Rules  
(65th), Paden, Calhoun, Holloway

## HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.      89

1            A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE ATHLETICISM AND NFL  
2 CAREER SUCCESS OF LEMUEL JOSEPH "LEM" BARNEY AND RECOGNIZING HIM  
3 AS ONE OF THE LEGENDARY FOOTBALL PLAYERS OF JACKSON STATE  
4 UNIVERSITY TO BE INDUCTED INTO THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE'S HALL  
5 OF FAME.

6            WHEREAS, Gulfport, Mississippi, native, Lemuel Joseph "Lem"  
7 Barney, who was born on September 8, 1945, and attended the city's  
8 33rd Avenue High School, where he played the quarterback position,  
9 would become one of the greatest football players to grace the  
10 gridiron, as a household name that would boast a statistical  
11 record that dreams and legends are made of; and

12            WHEREAS, during Barney's collegiate career, which began as a  
13 member of the Jackson State University Tigers Football Team from  
14 1964 to 1966 under Head Coach Rod Paige, he amassed 26 career  
15 interceptions, including nine in 1965 and eleven in 1966, and  
16 respectively held a punt average of 41.7 and 42.5 yards; and

17            WHEREAS, a consecutive three-time All-Southwestern Athletic  
18 Conference athlete, Barney, who was also selected for the  
19 All-American team by *EBONY* Magazine and the *Pittsburgh Courier*,



20 was comparatively unknown when he was drafted as the 34th overall  
21 pick in the second round of the 1967 National Football League  
22 Draft by the Detroit Lions, but with only a few games under his  
23 belt, the rookie 6-foot, 188-pound speedster became one of the  
24 premier cornerbacks in pro football, appearing in all 14 rookie  
25 year games as a starting cornerback and leading the league with 10  
26 interceptions, 232 interception return yards and three  
27 interceptions returned for touchdowns, which began with his very  
28 first NFL game on September 17, 1967, when he intercepted a first  
29 quarter pass thrown by Bart Starr and returned 24 yards for a  
30 touchdown; and

31 WHEREAS, a durable and versatile player, Lem assumed the role  
32 of the Lions' punter after Pat Studstill was sidelined by an  
33 injury, and punted 47 times for an average of 37.4 yards, in  
34 addition to simultaneously playing fulltime at his cornerback  
35 position, and in his 11 seasons in the league, he totaled 56  
36 interceptions, 1,011 interception return yards, seven  
37 interceptions returned for touchdowns, returned 143 punts for  
38 1,312 yards and three touchdowns, as well as 50 kickoff returns  
39 for 1,274 yards, including a 98-yard return for a touchdown, which  
40 enabled him to: be named NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year by the  
41 *Associated Press* in 1967; appearing in seven Pro Bowls; be  
42 selected as a first-team All-NFL player in 1968 and 1969; be  
43 selected as an All-NFC player in 1972 and 1975; and be selected a  
44 three-time All-Pro; and



WHEREAS, subsequent to his retirement in 1979, Lem, an accomplished singer, who had befriended Motown recording artist Marvin Gaye during Gaye's unsuccessful try out for the Lions in 1970, sang background vocals on Gaye's 1971 classic "What's Going On," was invited to sing the national anthem at the 2015 Pro Football Hall of Fame induction ceremony, and briefly got a taste of Hollywood as an actor with roles in *Paper Lion* and *The Black Six* in 1968 and 1974, respectively; and

WHEREAS, for his superior showcase of athleticism, Barney has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, which include: induction into the 1980 Detroit Lions Hall of Fame; induction into the 1983 Jackson State University Hall of Fame; induction into the 1985 Michigan Sports Hall of Fame; induction into the 1986 Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame; enshrinement into the 1992 Pro Football Hall of Fame; selected in 1997 as the best cornerback in NFL history by the *Detroit Free Press*; and ranked 97th on *The Sporting News'* list of 100 Greatest Football Players in 1999; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to recognize and pay homage to the stellar athletic feats of sports' legends of Lem Barney's caliber:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend the athleticism and NFL career success of Lemuel Joseph "Lem" Barney and recognize him as one of



69 the legendary football players of Jackson State University to be  
70 inducted into the National Football League's Hall of Fame.

71 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
72 furnished to Lemuel Joseph "Lem" Barney and to the members of the  
73 Capitol Press Corps.

