

By: Representatives Banks, Watson, Paden, Bell (65th), Brown (70th), Straughter, Walker, Aguirre, Anderson (110th), Anderson (122nd), Andrews, Anthony, Arnold, Bailey, Bain, Barnett, Barton, Beckett, Bell (21st), Bennett, Blackmon, Bomgar, Bounds, Boyd, Brown (20th), Burnett, Busby, Byrd, Calvert, Carpenter, Chism, Clark, Clarke, Cockerham, Crawford, Creekmore IV, Criswell, Crudup, Currie, Darnell, Denton, Deweese, Dortch, Eubanks, Eure, Evans (45th), Evans (91st), Faulkner, Felsher, Ford (54th), Ford (73rd), Foster, Gibbs (36th), Gibbs (72nd), Goodin, Guice, Gunn, Hale, Haney, Harness, Hines, Hobgood-Wilkes, Holloway, Hood, Hopkins, Horan, Horne, Huddleston, Hudson, Jackson, Johnson, Karriem, Kinkade, Ladner, Lamar, Lancaster, Mangold, Massengill, McCarty, McCray, McGee, McKnight, McLean, McLeod, Mickens, Miles, Mims, Morgan, Newman, Oliver, Osborne, Owen, Patterson, Pigott, Porter, Powell, Read, Reynolds, Roberson, Rosebud, Rushing, Sanford, Scoggin, Scott, Shanks, Smith, Steverson, Summers, Taylor, Thompson, Tullos, Turner, Wallace, Weathersby, White, Williams-Barnes, Williamson, Yancey, Yates, Young, Zuber

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 13

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND HONORING THE
 2 LIFE, LEGACY AND SERVICE OF MR. WILLIAM JOSEPH "BILLY" MCCOY
 3 FORMER SPEAKER OF THE MISSISSIPPI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND
 4 EXPRESSING GREAT SYMPATHY UPON HIS PASSING.

5 WHEREAS, on November 12, 2019, the final gavel tolled the
 6 transformation of celebrated public servant, longtime Legislator
 7 and former Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives,
 8 Mr. William Joseph "Billy" McCoy, when he was summoned home to
 9 rest eternally with his Lord and Savior at the blessed age of 77;
 10 and

11 WHEREAS, a visionary leader, lawmaker and public servant,
 12 dedicated farmer, beloved father, grandfather and
 13 great-grandfather and loyal friend were all words used to describe



14 the man most often referred to with love and admiration as
15 "Billy"; and

16 WHEREAS, born in Prentiss County on August 14, 1942, to the
17 late Elmer E. McCoy and Susie Beasley McCoy, who were longtime
18 educators, a young Billy was raised with his hands in the
19 Mississippi soil, working the fields and following the good
20 teachings of his Appalachian family ancestry; and

21 WHEREAS, his love for the land was further nurtured during
22 his education in the Prentiss County Public Schools, where he
23 particularly enjoyed his involvement with the Future Farmers of
24 America, and his education at Northeast Mississippi Junior
25 College, where he earned an undergraduate degree in agriculture
26 and Mississippi State University, where he earned his degree in
27 agriculture education; and

28 WHEREAS, he began his path, soon to be legacy of public
29 service, immediately after obtaining his college education, when
30 he became a Vocational Agriculture Teacher for a few years and
31 went on to work for State Auditor Hamp King as an auditor of
32 public schools; and

33 WHEREAS, Billy's inspiration to public service with the
34 Mississippi House of Representatives was born with his father,
35 former State Representative Elmer E. McCoy, who served the
36 Legislature for 16 years; and

37 WHEREAS, in 1980, Representative William Joseph "Billy" McCoy
38 began serving as the State Representative for House District 3



39 that his father previously represented, and would continue serving
40 that district and the people of the State of Mississippi for the
41 next 32 years with pride and distinction; and

42 WHEREAS, his strong work ethic combined with his political
43 savvy caused him to quickly rise from freshman legislator to
44 influential Vice Chairman of the Highways and Highway Financing
45 (now Transportation) Committee in 1984, to his appointment as
46 Chairman of the House Education Committee in 1993, to his tapping
47 in 2000 to chair the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, and
48 culminating in his 2004 election by his colleagues to the Office
49 of Speaker of the House of Representatives, in which he served two
50 terms; and

51 WHEREAS, Speaker McCoy was a guiding force in virtually every
52 meaningful economic development, educational, transportation and
53 agricultural program, and amongst his proudest legislative moments
54 were the 1987 Four-Lane Highway Program for which he is credited
55 with being the co-author and "work horse," and the Mississippi
56 Adequate Education Program, which modernized and equalized the
57 funding for public education all across Mississippi and included a
58 one cent sales tax to enhance monies to public schools; and

59 WHEREAS, during his more than three decades of diligence and
60 devotion to the needs of the citizens of Mississippi, many
61 constituents, colleagues and friends often referred to him as the
62 "People's Champion" because of his progressive attitude and his
63 keen vision and perspective about the future of Mississippi, and



64 as a strong advocate for programs benefiting the mentally
65 challenged and his unwavering support of community colleges; and

66 WHEREAS, during his time in the Legislature, Speaker McCoy's
67 committee assignments have included: Agriculture, Apportionment
68 and Elections, Education, Penitentiary, Highways and Highway
69 Financing (Transportation), Appropriations, Management, State
70 Library, Joint Congressional Redistricting, Joint Legislative
71 Reapportionment, PERS, Juvenile Justice, Legislative Budget, Ways
72 and Means, Investigation of State Offices, Rules, and Joint
73 Legislative Code Compilation, Revision and Publication; and

74 WHEREAS, because many people near and far cherished his great
75 contributions to this state, his name has been given great honor
76 in various ways, including having Group Homes in Booneville named
77 after him, McCoy Hall on the campus of Northeast bears testimony
78 to both his father and himself, and after his long and
79 distinguished service, the Legislature recognized his unselfish
80 and untiring contributions to the state he so loved by naming the
81 Mississippi Department of Transportation Headquarters Building
82 across the street from the State Capitol, the William J. "Billy"
83 McCoy Transportation Building; and

84 WHEREAS, throughout his life, he has been honored with many
85 awards, but amongst his most cherished awards were Paul Harris
86 Fellow, Trailblazers Award, Prentiss County Outstanding Citizen,
87 MSU Alumnus of the Year, and being featured on the cover of Farm
88 Bureau Magazine; and



89 WHEREAS, many articles and descriptions of Billy always have
90 described him as a man who knew "from whence he came and whither
91 bound" and he used common decency and respect for everyone and a
92 work ethic derived from his "knot on a log" approach to getting
93 things done; and

94 WHEREAS, while his celebrated public life is a matter of
95 public record, Mr. William Joseph "Billy" McCoy was really a
96 homebody, whose priority was loving his family and providing for
97 them dearly; and

98 WHEREAS, this champion of Prentiss and Alcorn Counties was
99 commonly known in the back roads and country stores not as "Mister
100 Speaker" but just plain, ole "Billy," unless you were his
101 grandchild and affectionately called him "Bill"; and

102 WHEREAS, a longtime member of the Gaston Baptist Church where
103 he had served as a Deacon, Billy was also a faithful member of the
104 Prentiss County and Mississippi Democratic Party, a 33rd Degree
105 Scottish Rite Mason; and

106 WHEREAS, a silently generous person, Billy always found time
107 to remain active in many charitable causes, and was instrumental
108 in encouraging thousands of young people to follow their dreams
109 and to never forget their responsibilities to give back to society
110 all they could for the benefits they enjoyed; and

111 WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi, the members of the
112 Legislature and citizens of Prentiss and Alcorn Counties will
113 forever remember the statesman affectionately known as "Billy"



114 McCoy, who lived his life with a passion and purpose to improve
115 the quality of life for all Mississippians; and

116 WHEREAS, to cherish his memory and honor his legacy, he
117 leaves his beloved wife of 56 years, Edith Leatherwood McCoy, whom
118 he married June 21, 1963; children, Sam and Kim; grandchildren,
119 Lee, Tate, Jackson, Molly Beth and Chloe; great-granddaughter,
120 McCoy; his sister, Mary Sue; sister-in-law, Barbara; his
121 Leatherwood family, Joyce Blackwell, Charley Leatherwood, Mary
122 Jewel Wade, Wayne Leatherwood and Glenda Lee; his confidant and
123 chief chauffeur the last few years, Jeff Williams; and a host of
124 cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends all around Mississippi and
125 the nation; and

126 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to honor and
127 commend the lives of outstanding Mississippi leaders, especially
128 those such as Mr. William Joseph "Billy" McCoy, whose unparalleled
129 public service, dauntless fortitude and remarkable dedication to
130 his family and his community, bring honor to the great State of
131 Mississippi:

132 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
133 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
134 THEREIN, That we do hereby mourn the loss and commemorate the life
135 and legacy of Mr. William Joseph "Billy" McCoy, and express
136 sincere and deepest sympathy to his family and friends upon his
137 passing.



138 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
139 furnished to the family of Mr. William J. McCoy and to the members
140 of the Capitol Press Corps.

