

By: Representatives Straughter, Bell (65th)

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 87

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

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

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

16 WHEREAS, a consecutive three-time All-Southwestern Athletic
17 Conference athlete, Barney, who was also selected for the
18 All-American team by *EBONY* Magazine and the *Pittsburgh Courier*,
19 was comparatively unknown when he was drafted as the 34th overall



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

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



44 WHEREAS, subsequent to his retirement in 1979, Lem, an
45 accomplished singer, who had befriended Motown recording artist
46 Marvin Gaye during Gaye's unsuccessful try out for the Lions in
47 1970, sang background vocals on Gaye's 1971 classic "What's Going
48 On," was invited to sing the national anthem at the 2015 Pro
49 Football Hall of Fame induction ceremony, and briefly got a taste
50 of Hollywood as an actor with roles in *Paper Lion* and *The Black*
51 *Six* in 1968 and 1974, respectively; and

52 WHEREAS, for his superior showcase of athleticism, Barney has
53 been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, which include:
54 induction into the 1980 Detroit Lions Hall of Fame; induction into
55 the 1983 Jackson State University Hall of Fame; induction into the
56 1985 Michigan Sports Hall of Fame; induction into the 1986
57 Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame; enshrinement into the 1992 Pro
58 Football Hall of Fame; selected in 1997 as the best cornerback in
59 NFL history by the *Detroit Free Press*; and ranked 97th on *The*
60 *Sporting News*' list of 100 Greatest Football Players in 1999; and

61 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
62 recognize and pay homage to the stellar athletic feats of sports'
63 legends of Lem Barney's caliber:

64 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
65 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
66 commend the athleticism and NFL career success of Lemuel Joseph
67 "Lem" Barney and recognize him as one of the legendary football



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

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

