

By: Senator(s) Fillingane

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 63

1 A RESOLUTION MOURNING THE PASSING OF LONGTIME PRESIDENT AND
2 CEO OF THE MISSISSIPPI ECONOMIC COUNCIL BOB W. PITTMAN OF
3 RIDGELAND, MISSISSIPPI, AND COMMENDING HIS OUTSTANDING PUBLIC AND
4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE TO OUR STATE.

5 WHEREAS, we join the members of the Mississippi Economic
6 Council and the economic development community of our state in
7 mourning the passing of Bob W. Pittman of Ridgeland, Mississippi,
8 on August 8, 2020; and

9 WHEREAS, one of the leading voices for government in the
10 State of Mississippi, Bob Pittman served as President and CEO of
11 the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) for 32 years. He was a
12 leader who dedicated his life's work to strengthening the
13 education system, improving county government, and developing
14 legislation to create a robust business climate; and

15 WHEREAS, as a young 33-year-old, Pittman was hand-selected by
16 M.B. Swayze, founder of MEC, as his successor as President and CEO
17 to carry on the mission of the of the organization. He believed
18 that leadership should be nurtured in others and it was his vision
19 to train leaders throughout the state that led him to create the



20 J.C. and Annie Redd Leadership Mississippi Program, the second
21 oldest leadership program in the nation. Leadership Mississippi
22 was developed to connect emerging leaders in and around the state
23 and has done so for over four decades; and

24 WHEREAS, in 2012 MEC honored Pittman for his years of service
25 with the creation of the Bob W. Pittman Leadership Mississippi
26 Media Scholarship; and

27 WHEREAS, while at MEC he founded the Student Teacher
28 Achievement Recognition (STAR) Program. Through this program,
29 thousands of Mississippi graduates and their teachers have been
30 recognized for outstanding achievement; and

31 WHEREAS, Pittman's love of economic development began as a
32 young journalist traveling the state for the *State Times* and later
33 the *Jackson Daily News*; and

34 WHEREAS, he was born April 25, 1932, to Mr. and Mrs. James C.
35 Pittman of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He attended Camp School and
36 went on to Hattiesburg High School where he sharpened his talent
37 on first base for the Hattiesburg Tigers. When the time came for
38 Bob to enter his senior year of high school, his parents had made
39 the decision to move the family to the small Town of Greenwood,
40 Mississippi, in the Mississippi Delta; and

41 WHEREAS, he graduated from Mississippi College with a B.S.
42 Degree in Education and he, along with his siblings, Jimmy, Jean,
43 and Mippy, in 2000 received the Order of the Golden Arrow Alumna



44 Award - the first time the award was presented to an entire
45 family; and

46 WHEREAS, after college he entered the United States Army in
47 1954, where he served for two years as Editor of the *Post*
48 *Newspaper* at Fort Lee, Virginia; and

49 WHEREAS, Pittman graduated from Jackson School of Law
50 (Mississippi College School of Law). He traveled across the state
51 reporting political. His travels as a Newspaper Reporter led him
52 back to Greenwood, Mississippi, where he served as Director of the
53 Greenwood-Leflore Industrial Board. In this role he was
54 instrumental in bringing businesses such as Baldwin Piano,
55 National Picture Frame Company and others to the Mississippi
56 Delta. He was named "Leflore County Outstanding Young Man of the
57 Year" for his work in economic development; and

58 WHEREAS, throughout his life he always returned to the pen.
59 He authored numerous books, primarily biographies of community
60 leaders such as businessman J.C. Redd (founder of Redd Pest
61 Control); Dr. Frank Pollard (former Pastor of First Baptist Church
62 of Jackson); Bobby Chain (founder of Chain Electric Company in
63 Hattiesburg); Dr. Dick Field (a rural Mississippi physician); and
64 Colonel George Hall (Hattiesburg resident and former Prisoner of
65 War). His first book, *At Home in America*, was the story of the
66 Colonel Nguyen family who fled communist Vietnam and with
67 Pittman's assistance began a new life in Jackson; and



68 WHEREAS, Bob was a member of First Baptist Church of Jackson,
69 Mississippi, where he was a lifetime Deacon and served in many
70 leadership roles in the church. He faithfully taught the Chapel
71 Bible Class at First Baptist Church Jackson for over 30 years,
72 ministering to its members with wife Joanne at his side; and

73 WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents, Mr. and
74 Mrs. James C. Pittman; his wife of 58 years, Joanne Barrett
75 Pittman; daughter, Emily Suzanne Pittman; son, Bob W. Pittman,
76 Jr.; brother, James C. Pittman, Jr.; granddaughter, Holly Dianne
77 Holbert; and sister-in-law, Nancy Pittman. Survivors include his
78 daughter, Dianne Pittman Holbert (John); three granddaughters:
79 Joanna Holbert, Sydney Margaret Holbert and Elizabeth Holbert
80 Jonson (Adam); grandson, Bob Pittman, III; three
81 great-grandchildren: Holly Elizabeth Jonson, Anne Margaret Jonson
82 and William Calhoun Jonson; two sisters, Jean Pittman Williams
83 (Kelley) and Charlotte Pittman Bledsoe (Randy); one brother,
84 Milton Pittman; sister-in-law, Lillian Pittman; and a number of
85 nieces and nephews; and

86 WHEREAS, we pay tribute and cherish fondly the memory of this
87 most public-spirited citizen of Mississippi whose enormous civic
88 energy will be missed:

89 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
90 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby mourn the passing of longtime
91 President and CEO of the Mississippi Economic Council Bob W.



92 Pittman of Ridgeland, Mississippi, and commending his outstanding
93 public and economic development service to our state;

94 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
95 the surviving family of Bob Pittman and forwarded to the CEO and
96 Executive Director of the Mississippi Economic Council, and made
97 available to the Capitol Press Corps.

