

By: Senator(s) Horhn, Simmons (12th),
Chassaniol, Jackson (32nd)

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 13

1 A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE RECOGNITION OF THE MISSISSIPPI
2 SENATE TO GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING SONGWRITER, PRODUCER AND ARRANGER
3 BENJAMIN WRIGHT AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2021 GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARD
4 FOR LIFE ACHIEVEMENT.

5 WHEREAS, the Grammy Award Winning Songwriter, Producer and
6 Arranger has announced its 2021 recipients, which includes
7 Benjamin Wright for Lifetime Achievement; and

8 WHEREAS, established in 1988, Governor's Arts Awards are
9 given to individuals and organizations to recognize outstanding
10 work in the artistic disciplines, as well as arts-based community
11 development and arts patronage in Mississippi. The awards are
12 presented in partnership with the Governor's Office and signify
13 the important relationship between government and the arts; and

14 WHEREAS, Benjamin Wright, Jr., was born in the Delta
15 Town of Greenville, Mississippi, in 1946 and has been
16 professionally active in the music business for more than 50
17 years; and

18 WHEREAS, in high school, Wright was a drum major and sang Doo
19 Wop with a local group. Soon he was on the road playing piano



20 with rhythm and blues icon Ted Taylor. While on the road, Wright
21 enrolled in the Berkeley College of Music, a correspondence school
22 at that time, in order to formally learn how to write
23 orchestrations. After serving in the Air Force, Wright toured the
24 country again, playing organ with Bobby Moore and the Rhythm Aces
25 before settling in Chicago; and

26 WHEREAS, in the Windy City, he joined leading soul and funk
27 session band, "Pieces of Peace," playing on countless records by
28 the likes of Jerry Butler, Jackie Wilson and Curtis Mayfield. At
29 the same time, he worked tirelessly as a Copyist for an array of
30 Legendary Arrangers, including Donny Hathaway, Gene Barge and
31 Charles Stepney, while also attending The Chicago Conservatory of
32 Music; and

33 WHEREAS, Wright also gained renown for his masterful skills
34 at producing and arranging, becoming one of the leading string
35 arrangers in the business; and

36 WHEREAS, requests for his orchestral arrangements continued
37 to grow, so he followed the industry as it expanded in Los
38 Angeles, where he has worked on hundreds of hit records by
39 artists, including Aretha Franklin, Rance Allen, James Ingram and
40 The Temptations; and

41 WHEREAS, in 1979, super producer Quincy Jones brought
42 Benjamin Wright in to arrange strings for Michael Jackson's debut
43 solo album *Off the Wall*. Wright's arrangements were featured on



several songs, including number-one hits "Rock With You" and
"Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough"; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin Wright went on to become a GRAMMY
Award-Winning Songwriter, Producer and Arranger. His work spanned
generations of GRAMMY-winning songs, including his contributions
to 2003's "FutureSex/LoveSounds" by Justin Timberlake and
"Speakerboxx/The Love Below" by hip hop duo OutKast; and

WHEREAS, a half-century into his prolific career, Wright
shows no signs of slowing down. He recently worked on recordings
with Mary J. Blige, Ty Dolla Sign and Frank Ocean. In 2019,
Benjamin Wright embarked on his first tour of solo shows; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we pay tribute and
express appreciation for the talent of World-Class Music Producer
Benjamin Wright who has made Mississippi a better place and
exemplifies the musical traditions of our great state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby extend the recognition of the
Mississippi Senate to Grammy Award-Winning Songwriter, Producer
and Arranger Benjamin Wright, the recipient of the 2021 Governor's
Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement, and extend our
congratulations to this mighty music producer and arranger on this
auspicious occasion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
Benjamin Wright as part of the Governor's Arts Awards
presentation, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

