

By: Senator(s) Michel, Horhn, Hopson,  
Frazier, Barnett, Boyd, Branning, Caughman,  
Chassaniol, DeBar, Fillingane, Jackson  
(11th), Jackson (32nd), Simmons (13th),  
Sparks, Thompson

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 19

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND RECOGNIZING THE ENDURING  
2 INFLUENCE OF MISSISSIPPI BUSINESS AND CIVIC LEADER LELAND RHYMES  
3 SPEED OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXTENDING THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY  
4 OF THE SENATE TO HIS BEREAVED FAMILY.

5 WHEREAS, Leland R. Speed, a business and civic giant in  
6 Mississippi and former Executive Director of the Mississippi  
7 Development Authority, passed away on January 27, 2021; and

8 WHEREAS, Leland Speed was founder and Chairman of Parkway  
9 Properties, Inc., and EastGroup Properties, Inc., both New York  
10 Stock Exchange-listed companies located in Jackson, Mississippi,  
11 and a member of the Mississippi Business Hall of Fame; and

12 WHEREAS, he was active in civic affairs and served on  
13 numerous boards, including the Jackson State University  
14 Development Foundation and as Chair of the Board of Trustees of  
15 Mississippi College. He was also one of the driving forces behind  
16 the Lefleur East Neighborhood Association and the Two Lakes Flood  
17 Control Project in Jackson. He served as the head of the  
18 Mississippi Development Authority during the Haley Barbour  
19 administration through Hurricane Katrina; and



20  
21           WHEREAS, Leland graduated from Central High School in Jackson  
22 in 1950 and then went to Georgia Tech site unseen, "for the  
23 challenge," graduating in 1954. After serving in Air Force  
24 intelligence, he proceeded to Harvard Business School where he  
25 graduated in 1958. After graduate school, Leland moved back to  
26 Jackson, joining his father, former Mayor of Jackson, Leland Speed  
27 Sr., aka "Pappy," in the securities business. The two Speeds also  
28 worked in the real estate business, developing the Eastover  
29 Subdivision in northeast Jackson. Leland's passion for community  
30 and civic involvement took off. He, along with three of his  
31 contemporaries, helped found Northminster Baptist Church in 1967,  
32 saying "Are we going to talk about it, or are we going to do  
33 something about it"? He taught Sunday School at Northminster for  
34 45 years. He helped found Downtown Jackson Partners, and his  
35 companies contributed greatly to the development of downtown  
36 Jackson. Leland enjoyed long-time service on the Mississippi  
37 College Board of Trustees as well as on the Jackson State  
38 University Foundation; and

39           WHEREAS, his service to community culminated in a stint as  
40 Executive Director of the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA)  
41 under Governor Haley Barbour. At MDA, where Leland worked for  
42 \$1.00 per year, he helped formulate plans for the Gulf Coast  
43 recovery after Hurricane Katrina. Leland also helped pioneer the  
44 charter school movement in Mississippi with RePublic Schools,



45 improving the lives of so many children and families just looking  
46 for an opportunity. He held leadership roles in numerous other  
47 civic organizations, devoting countless hours to the betterment of  
48 the community. Leland was passionate about Jackson and  
49 Mississippi, and it showed in his decades of service; and

50 WHEREAS, Leland is survived by his loving wife of 50 years,  
51 Bessie Sarphe Speed; their three boys, Stewart, Forrest (Mary  
52 Kelly) and Warren (Marla); and nine wonderful grandchildren:  
53 Collins, Isabelle, Warner, Bennett, Elizabeth, Graham, Preston,  
54 Mary Locke and Katherine. He is also survived by siblings Shelly,  
55 Joe (Nancy) and Lake (Rice). He is predeceased by his parents and  
56 younger brother James; and

57 WHEREAS, we pay tribute and cherish fondly the memory of this  
58 most public-spirited citizen of Mississippi with enormous civic  
59 energy, who will be missed:

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
61 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend and recognize the enduring  
62 influence of Mississippi business and civic leader Leland Rhymes  
63 Speed of Jackson, Mississippi, and extend the deepest sympathy of  
64 the Senate to his bereaved family.

65 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
66 the surviving family of Leland Speed, forwarded to the Mississippi  
67 Development Authority, and be made available to the Capitol Press  
68 Corps.

