SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 44

A RESOLUTION MOURNING THE PASSING OF LONGTIME FUNERAL HOME OWNER LUZERN "SONNY" DILLON OF MCCOMB, MISSISSIPPI, AND RECOGNIZING HIS CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS AS THE FIRST BLACK-ELECTED OFFICIAL IN WALTHALL COUNTY.

WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of longtime funeral home owner Luzern "Sonny" Dillon of McComb, Mississippi, known for his generosity and easy-going manner, on March 8, 2021, at age 72 of complications from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Sonny Dillon and his wife, Georgia, owned Craft and Craft-Ginn Funeral Chapel in Tylertown. He was also the first black-elected official in Walthall County, among other distinctions; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dillon was born on December 6, 1948, in Tylertown. He worked at Washington Funeral Home as a child and graduated from J.J. Gulledge High School. In 1967, he went to the Kentucky School of Mortuary Science in Louisville, Kentucky. He continued to work at Washington Funeral Home for 37 years; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, Dillon decided to run for Tylertown Alderman and won with both black and white support. Becoming
Tylertown's first black Alderman drew media attention, including national TV and the Chicago Sun-Times. He was one of Mississippi's first two black-elected officials south of Jackson; and

WHEREAS, Dillon was Walthall County's first black Notary. He served as President of the Walthall County Chapter of the NAACP and was Coordinator of the Walthall County Coalition; and

WHEREAS, the Dillons moved to McComb in 1984, and he went to work managing Craft Funeral Home in 1992, becoming the owner in 1998. The Dillons purchased Craft-Ginn in 2013. In 2018, Dillon received the Osborne Bell Award from the Mississippi Funeral Directors and Morticians Association; and

WHEREAS, Dillon served on the State Funeral Service Board for eight years, appointed by Governor Bill Allain and Governor Ray Mabus, and worked as an Inspector for the board; and

WHEREAS, Dillion was a member of the McComb Rotary Club and the Pike County Minority Business League, as well as a life member of the NAACP; and

WHEREAS, Dillon crossed the racial barrier by handling funeral services for members of the Episcopal Church. He attended Walker Chapel Freewill Baptist Church, where he was Chairman of the Trustee Board. Dillon was instrumental in helping the church buy surrounding properties; and
WHEREAS, we pay tribute and cherish fondly the memory of this
most public-spirited citizen of South Mississippi whose enormous
civic energy and generosity will be missed:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby mourn the passing of longtime
funeral home owner Luzern "Sonny" Dillon of McComb, Mississippi,
and recognize his civic contributions as the first black-elected
official in Walthall County, and extend to his surviving family
our deepest sympathy and commend his public service and
contributions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
the surviving family of Luzern "Sonny" Dillon, forwarded to the
Mississippi State Board of Funeral Service, and made available to
the Capitol Press Corps.