

By: Senator(s) Witherspoon

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 44

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

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

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

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

18 WHEREAS, in the 1970s, Dillon decided to run for Tylertown  
19 Alderman and won with both black and white support. Becoming



20 Tylertown's first black Alderman drew media attention, including  
21 national TV and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. He was one of  
22 Mississippi's first two black-elected officials south of Jackson;  
23 and

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

27 WHEREAS, the Dillons moved to McComb in 1984, and he went to  
28 work managing Craft Funeral Home in 1992, becoming the owner in  
29 1998. The Dillons purchased Craft-Ginn in 2013. In 2018, Dillon  
30 received the Osborne Bell Award from the Mississippi Funeral  
31 Directors and Morticians Association; and

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

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

38 WHEREAS, Dillon crossed the racial barrier by handling  
39 funeral services for members of the Episcopal Church. He attended  
40 Walker Chapel Freewill Baptist Church, where he was Chairman of  
41 the Trustee Board. Dillon was instrumental in helping the church  
42 buy surrounding properties; and



43           WHEREAS, we pay tribute and cherish fondly the memory of this  
44 most public-spirited citizen of South Mississippi whose enormous  
45 civic energy and generosity will be missed:

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

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

