

By: Representative Carpenter

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 47

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMEMORATING
2 THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RETIRED BRIGADIER GENERAL MARTHA JO LESLIE.

3 WHEREAS, it is written in Ecclesiastes 3:1 that "To
4 everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under
5 the Heaven," and as such, on January 19, 2022, the grand architect
6 of the universe summoned the mortal presence of dearly beloved,
7 Retired Brigadier General Martha Jo Leslie, to eternal rest,
8 rendering great sorrow and loss to her family, friends and
9 community; and

10 WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi and the Mississippi Army
11 National Guard lost a wonderful friend, revered medical
12 professional and community treasure with the passing of General
13 Leslie, who was born to Mose and Bessie Leslie on May 9, 1930, in
14 Sallis, Mississippi, and there is now a hush in our hearts as we
15 come together to pay our respects to the memory of one who has
16 been called to join that innumerable heavenly caravan; and

17 WHEREAS, a graduate of Thomastown High School, General Leslie
18 fulfilled a childhood dream when she graduated from the



19 Mississippi Baptist School of Nursing in 1951, and her employment
20 as a registered nurse at the Baptist Hospital Emergency Room began
21 a nursing career that would span 40 years; and

22 WHEREAS, during her illustrious and selfless career as a
23 nurse, General Leslie held numerous positions, including office
24 nurse, surgical nurse, instructor, standards writer for nursing
25 positions, nursing home consultant and the quality assurance nurse
26 for Beverly Enterprises at the time of her retirement, and
27 additionally, she was a Red Cross volunteer disaster nurse for
28 many years and received the prestigious Lola Byrd Award for her
29 years of volunteer work during disasters; and

30 WHEREAS, General Leslie's extensive and accomplished military
31 career began in 1959 as a First Lieutenant with the 134th EVAC
32 Hospital, and ended in 1992 when she retired as a Brigadier
33 General, and at one point during her tenure, she was the only
34 female in the Mississippi Army National Guard and recalled
35 marching in a Camp Shelby parade of 10,000 soldiers, 9,999 of
36 whom, she claimed, were out of step; and

37 WHEREAS, General Leslie and her team taught the first 91B
38 school at Camp Shelby, training soldiers to become medics, and not
39 only was she the first female nurse in the United States to be
40 promoted to colonel in the National Guard, but at the time of her
41 retirement, she was also Chief Nurse of HHD, 213th Medical Group;
42 and



43 WHEREAS, during her career, General Leslie was activated
44 twice for federal service, and while she received numerous awards,
45 some of the most prestigious decorations and military awards a
46 fearless soldier can receive, the award she cherished the most was
47 the Mississippi Magnolia Medal for her team leadership in caring
48 for thousands of evacuees at Camp Shelby following Hurricane
49 Camille; and

50 WHEREAS, after retiring from the National Guard and the
51 medical profession, General Leslie was appointed by the Governor
52 to serve on the State Veterans Affairs Board, making her the first
53 female to be appointed to that board, and she served for 15 years,
54 12 of which as the chairperson, and under her leadership, the
55 first Mississippi State Veterans Memorial Cemetery was approved
56 and constructed in Newton County, Mississippi; and

57 WHEREAS, the Veterans Affairs Board and the Mississippi
58 Legislature honored her for her role in improving the operations
59 of state veterans affairs homes by designating the veterans
60 affairs home located in Kosciusko, Mississippi, as the "Martha Jo
61 Leslie State Veterans Home", and at the age of 90, dressed in red,
62 white and blue, wearing a red baseball cap and walking with a
63 cane, she trudged through the cemetery of her home church in Leake
64 County, Mississippi, laying Christmas wreaths that she provided on
65 the graves of veterans interred in that cemetery; and

66 WHEREAS, in her spare time, General Leslie served on the
67 Board of Directors of the Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby, the



68 Board of Directors of the Red Cross and the Board of Directors of
69 the Alzheimer's Association, but beneath her tough exterior was a
70 soft and loving heart and she enjoyed gardening, decorating,
71 cooking, entertaining and hosting Christmas Eve dinners; and

72 WHEREAS, General Leslie was a strong, loving and
73 compassionate nurse, veteran, aunt, neighbor, confidante and
74 friend who touched the lives of all those who crossed her sweet
75 and charming path, and her warm hugs and bright smile will be
76 forever cherished by her family, friends and others who knew her
77 and experienced her greatness; and

78 WHEREAS, though she has traversed life's river to now stand
79 upon the celestial shores in wonderment of Heaven's grandeur in
80 glorious reunion with the kindred spirits who transitioned before
81 her, including her parents; brother, Hubert Leslie; sisters,
82 Christine Chavers, Helen Cain and Polly Leslie; brother-in-law,
83 Troy Cain; and nephews, Troy Cain, Jr., Bill Cain, Dick Cain,
84 Jackie Leslie and Roy Leslie, the memories of General Leslie will
85 continue to flourish in the hearts and minds of her survivors:
86 her nieces, Jeanette Cain Winstead (Jack) and Wanda Leslie Price
87 (Joe); several great-nieces and great-nephews; and a host of other
88 relatives and friends; and

89 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to recognize
90 and honor the lives of fine Mississippians, especially those such
91 as Retired Brigadier General Martha Jo Leslie, a heroic woman of
92 unparalleled stature who served as a valuable role model to



93 countless women, nurses and Army officers throughout her life,
94 bringing glory and honor to the State of Mississippi:

95 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
96 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
97 THEREIN, That we do hereby mourn the loss and commemorate the life
98 and legacy of Brigadier General Martha Jo Leslie, and express
99 deepest sympathy to her family and friends upon her passing.

100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
101 furnished to the family of Brigadier General Martha Jo Leslie and
102 to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

