

By: Representative Reynolds

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1

1 A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. ALTON COBB
2 AND EXPRESSING DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS UPON HIS
3 PASSING.

4 WHEREAS, it is written in Ecclesiastes 3:1 that "To
5 everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under
6 the Heaven," and as such, on October 14, 2021, the immaculate
7 author and finisher of our soul's destiny summoned the mortal
8 presence of dearly beloved, Dr. Alton Cobb, to eternal rest,
9 rendering great sorrow and loss to his family and friends; and

10 WHEREAS, affectionately known to his family as "Al," Dr. Cobb
11 was born in a dog-trot log cabin without electricity to Joseph
12 Harrison and Winnie Ora Cobb in the Cameron community near Camden,
13 Mississippi, on October 19, 1928, and from that dirt road in
14 Madison County he went on to a distinguished career and life of
15 purpose and public service; and

16 WHEREAS, as a child, Dr. Cobb attended a one-room schoolhouse
17 in Camden and graduated from Camden High School in 1946, and
18 afterwards he attended Holmes Junior (Community) College, and



19 graduated from the University of Mississippi, where he also
20 attended the medical school program; and

21 WHEREAS, Dr. Cobb remained a strong proponent of public
22 education his entire life, and he loved Ole Miss tremendously and
23 made it plain to his nine grandchildren that he would help with
24 the cost of college if, and only if, they went to the University
25 of Mississippi; and

26 WHEREAS, Dr. Cobb then attended Johns Hopkins Medical School
27 in Baltimore, Maryland, and while there, he met a young Waterloo,
28 Iowa, nursing student named Mary O'Connor who worked as a nurse on
29 one of his cases, and he called her that very first evening for a
30 date; and

31 WHEREAS, Dr. Cobb earned his medical degree from Johns
32 Hopkins in 1954, and in a feat that was equally impressive,
33 convinced Mary to marry him and move south; and

34 WHEREAS, after his internship at Charity Hospital in New
35 Orleans, Dr. Cobb then completed two years of active service in
36 the United States Army Medical Corps during the Korean War, and
37 shortly thereafter, he received a master of public health degree
38 from Tulane University in 1960, and retired as a full colonel from
39 the Mississippi National Guard following many years of service;
40 and

41 WHEREAS, after a brief solo medical practice in the small
42 town of Pickens, Mississippi, Dr. Cobb began a career in public
43 health that would occupy him for the next 35 years, as he first



44 served as a county health director for Sunflower County, and
45 thereafter as the director of Chronic Disease Services for the
46 State Department of Health; and

47 WHEREAS, Dr. Cobb was an active voice in conversations with
48 Governor John Bell Williams about whether to bring Medicaid to
49 Mississippi, and when that came to pass, he became the first
50 executive director of the Mississippi Medicaid Commission; and

51 WHEREAS, in 1973, Dr. Cobb was appointed as State Health
52 Officer for the Mississippi Department of Health, a position he
53 held until 1992, and as he was assisted by dedicated public
54 servants, he led the reorganization of the agency and several
55 major initiatives, including: implementing the nationally
56 recognized Mississippi Women's, Infants' and Children's Program; a
57 reduction in infant mortality and tuberculosis rates; compulsory
58 school vaccinations; modernized public health statutes; stronger
59 patient protection in nursing homes and licensure regulations for
60 home health care; and a statewide emergency medical services
61 system; and

62 WHEREAS, after retiring from the Mississippi State Department
63 of Health, Dr. Cobb served almost a decade as clinical consultant
64 for Information and Quality Healthcare; and

65 WHEREAS, Dr. Cobb received numerous honors and awards during
66 his distinguished career, including Alumnus of the Year from
67 Holmes Community College and the Tulane School of Public Health;
68 the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service by the



69 Johns Hopkins School of Medicine; an award of Merit by the
70 American Public Health Association; Public Administrator of the
71 Year for Mississippi in 1981; Blair Batson Award of Merit from the
72 Mississippi Academy of Pediatrics; and the Humanitarian Award from
73 the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians; and for several
74 years he served as an alternate delegate from Mississippi to the
75 American Medical Association; and

76 WHEREAS, in retirement, Dr. Cobb invested in charitable
77 causes, often those raised to him as valuable by his wife, and he
78 spent countless hours at the "old home place," near Camden, where
79 he inspected his pine trees and welcomed families and friends for
80 regular Sunday gatherings; and

81 WHEREAS, once asked by his wife what he would wish if he were
82 granted one last wish, Dr. Cobb quipped, "More affordable and
83 accessible health care for all the people of Mississippi," and as
84 he was practical, principled and uninterested in material
85 possessions, he spent his life working towards that end; and

86 WHEREAS, as a genuine man of exceptional character, Dr.
87 Cobb's legacy will continue for generations to come, and his
88 outstanding devotion to his family and to his community will
89 always be remembered, and precious memories of time spent with him
90 will hopefully continue to provide warmth, peace and comfort to
91 his loved ones; and

92 WHEREAS, though he has traversed the river of life to
93 reunite with those who answered God's summons to life eternal and



94 now beckon his arrival to the celestial shores of Heaven's
95 grandeur, such as his parents and his older brother, John Herbert,
96 the legacy of Dr. Cobb's indelible imprint upon our lives will
97 continue to refresh the hearts and fond memories of his loved
98 ones, including his wife of 67 years, Mrs. Mary O'Connor Cobb;
99 three children, Mary Alene Alford, Dr. Tommy Cobb and Susan Cobb;
100 nine grandchildren, all of whom he was immensely proud, Timothy
101 Alford, Leah Hendrix, John Paul Alford, Jenny Sneed, Lauren
102 Steele, Cameron Cobb, Scott Jimenez, Sara Burns and Mary Grace
103 Suggs; 19 great-grandchildren, of whom he was unabashedly prouder;
104 and a host of other relatives and dear friends; and

105 WHEREAS, Dr. Cobb will forever be loved, cherished and missed
106 by all who knew him, and since it is written in 2 Corinthians 5:8,
107 that to be "absent from the body is to be present with the Lord,"
108 his family and friends can find peace and comfort during this
109 difficult time; and

110 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
111 recognize and commend the lives of outstanding Mississippians,
112 especially those such as Dr. Cobb, who certainly inspired everyone
113 he met and whose life's light illuminated the path of hope for all
114 he encountered along his earthly sojourn:

115 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
116 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
117 honor the life and legacy of Dr. Alton Cobb, and express sincere
118 and deepest sympathy to his family and friends upon his passing.



119 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
120 furnished to the family of Dr. Alton Cobb and to the members of
121 the Capitol Press Corps.

