

By: Representatives Gibbs (72nd), Banks,
Brown (70th), Bell (65th), Clarke, Foster,
Hines, Holloway, Johnson, Paden, Summers,
Yates

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 85

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE HONORABLE JUDGE DENISE OWENS FOR
2 PROVIDING 33 YEARS OF EXEMPLARY SERVICE AS HINDS COUNTY DISTRICT 3
3 CHANCERY JUDGE, AND CONGRATULATING HER UPON RETIREMENT FROM THIS
4 POSITION AFTER PROVIDING STELLAR JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP TO THE
5 CITIZENS OF MISSISSIPPI.

6 WHEREAS, the Honorable Judge Denise Owens, the Senior
7 Chancellor for Hinds County Chancery Court, will lay down her
8 judicial gavel and retire as Chancellor for Hinds County District
9 3 at the end of her term in 2022, after passionately serving the
10 citizens of this great state for 33 years and creating a positive
11 impact in the lives of countless citizens of this state; and

12 WHEREAS, she is so well respected amongst her peer group of
13 Chancery Court judges that she has held leadership positions in
14 the Conference of Chancery Judges which is the governing body for
15 Mississippi's Chancery Judges since 1996, when she was elected
16 secretary, in 1998, when she was elected vice chair and program
17 chairperson in 1998 and 2000, and where she served as Conference
18 Chair for two years; and



19 WHEREAS, she began her legal career in 1979, when she earned
20 her Juris Doctorate from George Washington University, in
21 Washington, D.C., and worked for two years as a law clerk at the
22 Washington, D.C. Legal Services Elder Law Clinic; and

23 WHEREAS, after being admitted to The Mississippi Bar, this
24 tenacious young lawyer landed her first Mississippi job as a staff
25 attorney for Central Mississippi Legal Services in Jackson,
26 Mississippi, where she worked hard to address the legal needs of
27 those who are traditionally underserved; and

28 WHEREAS, she ventured out to private legal practice in 1983,
29 by working as an associate attorney with The Law Firm of Owens and
30 Byrd, where she continued to hone her legal skills and caught the
31 attention of the mayor of Jackson, Mississippi, who was so
32 impressed by her legal acumen, that she was appointed to work as
33 the Assistant City prosecutor from 1983 through 1986, while she
34 still worked as an associate lawyer at the law firm; and

35 WHEREAS, she parted ways with the city in 1986 upon earning
36 the titles of partner and managing attorney for The Law Firm of
37 Owens and Owens; and

38 WHEREAS, Judge Owens has been and continues to be a legal
39 scholar, as evidenced by her other accomplishments in the world of
40 legal academia, such as graduating from the Court Practice
41 Institute in Chicago, Illinois, and completing advanced judicial
42 studies at both the National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada, and
43 the College of Business Court Judges; and



44 WHEREAS, Judge Owens is very passionate about educating the
45 next generation of lawyers and has spent countless hours
46 throughout her career serving in various academic leadership
47 roles, such as working as a pre-law program advisor and adjunct
48 professor at Tougaloo College, sponsoring Tougaloo College's
49 Pre-Law Society, and teaching paralegal technology at Hinds
50 Community College to nurture the next generation of legal
51 scholars, in order to impart wisdom in the minds of young people;
52 and

53 WHEREAS, since her days at legal services, she has continued
54 her efforts to use her position to improve the quality of life for
55 others by financially sponsoring legal education programs for law
56 students and young attorneys, working with the National
57 Association of Women Judges to present the Color of Justice, an
58 annual program which introduces young female students to careers
59 as lawyers and judges, serving on the Board of the Council of
60 Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) to increase diversity on the
61 bench and bar by promoting interest in careers in law, and
62 organizing a law camp to reach girls, ages 12 to 15, to encourage
63 them to pursue law as a career, and increase their self-esteem and
64 awareness, and sitting on the Task Force on Gender Fairness and
65 the Gender Fairness Advisory Study Committee which seeks to level
66 the playing field on issues of gender fairness by educating the
67 judicial bench, The Mississippi Bar and the public about the
68 importance of gender fairness; and



69 WHEREAS, Judge Owens' ability to work toward and attain
70 positive results for the underserved has garnered so much respect
71 from her colleagues that she has held numerous leadership roles in
72 philanthropic organizations, including the Access to Justice
73 Commission for the last 10 years, where she is co-chair and helps
74 to guide the organization, formulate recommendations implemented
75 by the Mississippi Supreme Court, and create strategies to make
76 the courts accessible to all people; and

77 WHEREAS, Judge Owens' fervent advocacy skills have resulted
78 in earning her prestigious appointments from the State Supreme
79 Court to the States' Pro Se Task Force, the Gender Bias Task
80 Force, the Race and Ethics Bias Task Force, the Mississippi
81 Delivery of Legal Services State Planning Board where she also
82 served as chair, and has completed her three-year term as
83 representative from the College of Business Court Judges to the
84 American Bar Association Corporate and Litigation Committee.

85 WHEREAS, Judge Owens' professional associations and
86 activities include membership in the Mississippi Bar Association,
87 the Mississippi Bar Foundation, the National Association of Women
88 Judges, the Magnolia Bar Association, Member of the American Bar
89 Association's Judicial Division, The American Trial Lawyers
90 Judicial Division, The National Bar Association's Judicial
91 Division, The Magnolia Bar Association Judicial Division, American
92 Bar Association (Corporate and Litigation Committee); and



93 WHEREAS, not surprisingly, Judge Owens' reputation of
94 impressive legal prowess coupled with high moral character have
95 gained her an impressive list of awards, such as the 2016 Susie
96 Blue Buchanan Award which is a prestigious award presented
97 annually by The Mississippi Bar's Women in the Profession
98 committee to honor an outstanding woman lawyer who has achieved
99 professional excellence and has actively paved the way to success
100 for other women lawyers, and in 2019, the Judicial Excellence
101 Award at the upcoming Mississippi State Bar meeting; and

102 WHEREAS, throughout all of her endeavors, she has enjoyed the
103 love and support of her husband of 41 years, Bob, and their four
104 children Selika, Bobby, Brittany and Jason, and upon her
105 retirement, she will bask in the adoration and affection of her
106 grandchildren; and

107 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
108 honor the extraordinary career and amazing philanthropy of elected
109 officials, such as Judge Denise Owens, who have blazed a
110 progressive trail for future generations of lawyers and other
111 professionals, affirmatively impacts the quality of life for
112 underserved citizens and lives a life built on justice in and out
113 of the courtroom:

114 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
115 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
116 commend the Honorable Judge Denise Owens for providing 33 years of
117 exemplary service as Hinds County District 3 Chancery Judge, and



118 congratulate her upon retirement from this position after
119 providing stellar judicial leadership to the citizens of
120 Mississippi.

121 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
122 furnished to Judge Denise Owens, and to the members of the Capitol
123 Press Corps.

