

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

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 86

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING FORMER MISSISSIPPI  
2 REPRESENTATIVE AND FORMER MISSISSIPPI SUPREME COURT JUSTICE  
3 HONORABLE FRED LEE BANKS, JR., ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RECEIPT OF  
4 THE PRESTIGIOUS "2021 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD" BY THE  
5 MISSISSIPPI BAR.

6 WHEREAS, we join The Mississippi Bar and the legal profession  
7 in honoring former Mississippi Representative and former  
8 Mississippi Supreme Court Justice, Honorable Fred Lee Banks, Jr.,  
9 upon his receipt of the "2021 Lifetime Achievement Award" by The  
10 Mississippi Bar, recognizing his stellar legal and judicial  
11 career; and

12 WHEREAS, born on September 1, 1942, in the heart of the  
13 capital city, to Mr. Fred Lee Banks, Sr., and Mrs. Violet Mabery  
14 Banks, the 1960 Lanier High School graduate, attended Washington,  
15 D.C.'s premier historically black college and university, Howard  
16 University, where he received his bachelor of business  
17 administration before earning his Juris Doctor degree from the  
18 Howard University School of Law in 1968, finishing second in his  
19 class with cum laude honors; and



20           WHEREAS, in a zealous effort to uphold the sworn oath to  
21 uphold the Constitution of the United States as an officer of the  
22 judiciary, after gaining admission to the bar in Mississippi,  
23 Judge Banks entered into private practice with several other  
24 attorneys, Reuben Anderson, John A. Nichols and Melvyn R.  
25 Leventhal, to form the office that became the firm Anderson,  
26 Banks, Nichols and Leventhal, the State of Mississippi's first  
27 interracial law office, wherein he served as counsel for the  
28 Mississippi NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund and, along with  
29 his partners, courageously fought segregation; and

30           WHEREAS, lifelong, childhood friends with his colleague and  
31 fellow jurist, Reuben Anderson, whose campaign for Jackson City  
32 Council he previously worked, Banks' aspirations to invoke  
33 meaningful political influence was birthed upon his 1975 election  
34 to the Mississippi House of Representatives, to which he was twice  
35 re-elected and faithfully discharged the duties of said office as  
36 Chair of the House Ethics Committee, Chair of a House Judiciary  
37 Committee and Chair of the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus,  
38 in addition to being appointed by the Governor to serve on the  
39 Mississippi Board of Bar Admissions, among a litany of other state  
40 and federal appointments, including his appointment to the  
41 National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged  
42 Children by President Jimmy Carter on September 24, 1979; and

43           WHEREAS, in February 1985, Representative Banks, whose  
44 esteemed legal career dedicated to civil rights and justice, as



45 well as fulfilling the role as president/CEO of the Mississippi  
46 Center for Justice, experienced an official changing of the guard  
47 by virtue of gubernatorial elevation, when Governor William "Bill"  
48 Allain appointed him to the bench as a Circuit Judge for the 7th  
49 Circuit District, which encompassed Hinds and Yazoo Counties, to  
50 fill the unexpired term of his childhood friend, Reuben Anderson;  
51 and

52 WHEREAS, after six years on the Circuit Court bench, Judge  
53 Banks was once again vetted to follow the steps of his fifth-grade  
54 friend, former law partner, and predecessor to the judiciary when  
55 Governor Ray Mabus appointed him to the Supreme Court to fill the  
56 remainder of Justice Anderson's term in January 1991, to which he  
57 was officially elected to serve in November 1991, and re-elected  
58 in 1996 to a full term, wherein his capacity as a presiding  
59 justice he authored 612 opinions before permanently retiring his  
60 robe to the chamber and silencing his gavel on October 3, 2001;  
61 and

62 WHEREAS, post retirement from the bench as publicly elected  
63 official, Judge Banks served on the National Board of Directors of  
64 the NAACP, the Minority Advisory Committee to the University of  
65 Mississippi School of Law, the Board of Visitors at Mississippi  
66 College School of Law, and Chair of the Criminal Justice Task  
67 Force of the Mississippi Bar Association, before returning to the  
68 private sector of law practice as a senior partner at the firm of  
69 Phelps Dunbar, LLP, where he has continued his civil rights



70 advocacy, and has been considered a wise voice of reason and  
71 consciousness as current Chairman of the Board of Directors of the  
72 Foundation for Mississippi History; and

73 WHEREAS, one who has perfected his craft by honing his skills  
74 through practice and professional associations with like-minded  
75 individuals, Judge Banks' successes are undoubtedly attributable  
76 to his immense legal talent, but therein also lies his innate  
77 ability to exemplify dignity, civility, consummate professionalism  
78 and adherence to the "Golden Rule" in the most challenging of  
79 circumstances, and are further highlighted by the paramount  
80 accolades he has amassed throughout his storied career, which has  
81 honored the state and federal judiciary, The Mississippi Bar, the  
82 Mississippi House of Representatives and this great state that he  
83 loves and serves; and

84 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to  
85 pay homage to an individual of Judge Banks' caliber, who, with  
86 intestinal fortitude, has served as a trailblazing pioneer, and  
87 whose contributions merit the same measure of recognition as his  
88 laudable career conveyed upon the State of Mississippi with honor  
89 and intrepid dignity:

90 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
91 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby  
92 commend and congratulate former Mississippi Representative and  
93 former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice, Honorable Fred Lee  
94 Banks, Jr., on the occasion of his receipt of the prestigious



95 "2021 Lifetime Achievement Award" by The Mississippi Bar and  
96 extend to him and his family our wishes for future success.

97 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
98 furnished to the Honorable Fred Lee Banks, Jr., The Mississippi  
99 Bar and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

