

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.

