

By: Representatives Gibbs (72nd), Roberson,  
Tullos, Taylor, Hood, White, Lamar,  
Cockerham, Clark

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 99

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING DEAN PATRICIA W. BENNETT FOR HER  
2 DISTINGUISHED LEGAL CAREER AND SCHOLASTIC CONTRIBUTIONS UPON HER  
3 RETIREMENT AS DEAN AT MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE SCHOOL OF LAW.

4 WHEREAS, after many years of dedication and service to her  
5 students and to the legal profession, Dean Patricia W. Bennett  
6 leaves a lasting legacy as she is retiring as Dean at Mississippi  
7 College School of Law (MC Law); and

8 WHEREAS, Dean Bennett, a native of Forest, Mississippi, and a  
9 Tougaloo College graduate who earned her Juris Doctorate at MC Law  
10 in 1979, possesses a well-rounded legal background steeped in  
11 success, having served as a Judge Advocate General Corps officer  
12 in the United States Army Reserve and Mississippi National Guard,  
13 special assistant attorney general with the Mississippi Attorney  
14 General's Office, assistant district attorney for Hinds and Yazoo  
15 Counties, and assistant United States attorney in the United  
16 States Department of Justice; and

17 WHEREAS, an exemplary academic leader who has been a member  
18 of the MC Law faculty since 1989, Dean Bennett has maintained an



19 extraordinary grasp of the deeply intricate aspects of her  
20 profession, including litigation, criminal law, criminal  
21 procedure, trial practice, mediation, advocacy and criminal  
22 procedure, and is the Henry Vaughan Watkins and Selby Watkins  
23 McRae Professor of Law and Director of the Litigation and Dispute  
24 Resolution Center; and

25 WHEREAS, in 2014, Dean Bennett was selected as Mississippi  
26 College's Distinguished Professor, which is the highest teaching  
27 award given by the university, and she is the immediate  
28 past-president of The Mississippi Bar, and is the third female,  
29 the second African American, and the first female  
30 African American to serve as the president of The Mississippi Bar;  
31 and

32 WHEREAS, Dean Bennett served as interim dean for one year  
33 after Dean Wendy Scott's departure, and in January 2018,  
34 Mississippi College's Board of Trustees unanimously voted to make  
35 her position permanent; and

36 WHEREAS, active in the legal profession, Dean Bennett served  
37 a two-year term as president of the Charles Clark Chapter of the  
38 American Inns of Court, and is currently the secretary-treasurer,  
39 and she is a fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation and has  
40 served as a trustee of the foundation; and

41 WHEREAS, Dean Bennett served as president of the Hinds County  
42 Bar Association, president of the Fifth Circuit Federal Bar  
43 Association and is a Governor Emeritus, and she is a member of the



44 Mississippi Bar Association, Magnolia Bar Association, American  
45 Bar Association, Fifth Circuit Federal Bar Association,  
46 Metro-Jackson Black Women Bar Association, Mississippi Women  
47 Lawyers Association and the Capital Area Bar Association; and

48 WHEREAS, for her exceptional service, Dean Bennett has  
49 received numerous honors, awards and certificates of appreciation,  
50 including: the 2019 National Pre-Law John Mercer Langston Legal  
51 Education Leadership Award, Metro Jackson Black Women Lawyers  
52 Association's Legal Trailblazers Award, Girl Scouts of Greater  
53 Mississippi Women of Distinction Award, Mississippi Women Lawyers  
54 Association's 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award, Capital Area Bar  
55 Association Professionalism Award, Hinds County Bar Association  
56 Outstanding Service Award, The Mississippi Bar Women in the  
57 Profession Susie Blue Buchanan Award, Mississippi Women Lawyers  
58 Association Outstanding Woman Lawyer of the Year Award,  
59 Mississippi College Alumni Association Lawyer of the Year Award,  
60 MC School of Law Professionalism in the Field of Law Award,  
61 Mississippi College School of Law Faculty Collegiality Award and  
62 the NAACP Jack Young Legal Award; and

63 WHEREAS, Dean Bennett has also been honored as a Woman of  
64 Achievement by Women for Progress, inducted in the Order of  
65 Barristers as an honorary member, recognized in 2019 by the  
66 Mississippi Business Journal as one of Mississippi's Top Leading  
67 Attorneys, and was honored in 2018 as one of Mississippi's Most  
68 Influential African Americans; and



69           WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to  
70 recognize great academic leaders, especially those such as Dean  
71 Bennett, whose dedication to her students and extraordinary  
72 leadership brings honor to the legal profession, Mississippi  
73 College School of Law, and to the State of Mississippi:

74           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
75 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby  
76 recognize and commend Dean Patricia W. Bennett upon the occasion  
77 of her retirement as Dean of Mississippi College School of Law,  
78 and extend to her our most sincere wishes for continued success in  
79 her lighter days ahead.

80           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
81 furnished to Dean Patricia W. Bennett and to the members of the  
82 Capitol Press Corps.

