

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Harkins, McMahan, Blackwell, Simmons (12th), Chassaniol, McCaughn, DeLano, Wiggins, Norwood, Frazier, Thomas, Seymour, Suber, Thompson, Blount, Williams, Butler (36th), Sparks, Barnett, Jackson (11th), Simmons (13th), Hickman, Polk, Younger, Whaley, McLendon, Hopson, Branning, Butler (38th), Caughman, England, Horhn, McDaniel

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 526

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY OF
2 THE LEGISLATURE ON THE PASSING OF LUSIA "LUCY" HARRIS OF MINTER
3 CITY, MISSISSIPPI, AND REMEMBERING HER LEGACY AS A PIONEER OF
4 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL ON THE OCCASION OF THE PREMIER OF THE
5 DOCUMENTARY FILM "THE QUEEN OF BASKETBALL" RELEASED IN HER HONOR.

6 WHEREAS, we mourn the passing of Lucy Harris, a Mississippi
7 sports legend, on January 18, 2022; and

8 WHEREAS, Lusia "Lucy" Harris was considered to be one of the
9 pioneers of women's basketball and was one the greatest women's
10 basketball players. As a dominating center, she won three
11 national titles and scored the first basket in the first Olympic
12 competition for women in 1976. Lucy was the first and only Black
13 woman to be drafted to the NBA (before the WNBA existed) courtesy
14 of the New Orleans Jazz. In 1992, Lucy became the first Black
15 woman to be inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Lucy Harris was born on February 10, 1955, in Minter
18 City, Mississippi, to Ethel and Willie Harris, a homemaker and
19 vegetable farmer, respectively. She is the tenth of eleven



20 children and the fourth of five daughters. Lucy and her siblings
21 attended Amanda Elzy High School in Greenwood, Mississippi, where
22 she won the Most Valuable Player Award in basketball for three
23 consecutive years, 1971 to 1973. She served as Team Captain and
24 made the State All-Star Team. She scored a school record 46
25 points in one game and led her school to the State Tournament in
26 Jackson, Mississippi; and

27 WHEREAS, after graduating from high school in 1973, Lucy
28 attended Delta State University. During her freshman year there,
29 she helped the Delta State Women's Basketball team to a 16-2
30 record. The following year, Lucy led Delta State in a 90-81
31 victory over Immaculata University in Immaculata, Pennsylvania, to
32 win the National Championship in Women's Basketball NCAA Division
33 III. Lucy led the team with 32 points and 16 rebounds. In the
34 1975-1976 season, Delta State and Immaculata met again in the
35 National Tournament Final, and Lucy led Delta State with 30 points
36 and 18 rebounds in a 69-64 victory over Immaculata; and

37 WHEREAS, Delta State returned to the National Tournament
38 Final in 1977, where she scored 23 points and 16 rebounds and led
39 her team in defeating Louisiana State University 68-55, for Delta
40 State's third consecutive title. Lucy finished her college career
41 with 2,981 points and 1,662 rebounds, averaging 25.9 points and
42 14.5 rebounds per game. Lucy was named as the tournament's Most
43 Valuable Player (MVP) and to the All-American First Team during
44 Delta State's three winning seasons. Harris graduated from Delta



45 State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Health, Physical
46 Education, and Recreation in 1977; and

47 WHEREAS, Lucy also played on the United States Women's
48 Basketball Team, which won Gold in the 1975 Pan American Games and
49 Silver in the 1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal, Canada; and

50 WHEREAS, Lucy was chosen in the seventh round of the 1977 NBA
51 draft by the New Orleans Jazz (now Utah Jazz), becoming only the
52 second woman ever drafted by an NBA team. However, the NBA voided
53 their first selection, thus making Lucy the first and so far only
54 woman ever officially drafted. Lucy declined to try out for the
55 Jazz because she was pregnant at the time. She played
56 professional basketball briefly in the 1979-1980 season with the
57 Houston (Texas) Angels of the Women's Professional Basketball
58 League (WBL); and

59 WHEREAS, after her basketball career ended, Harris returned
60 to Delta State to earn her Master's Degree in Education in 1984.
61 In 1992, Harris and former player, Nera White, became the first
62 two women ever inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall
63 of Fame. Harris was the first African American woman inductee.
64 Harris was also inducted into to the Woman's Basketball Hall of
65 Fame and the International Woman's Sports Hall of Fame; and

66 WHEREAS, Harris married George E. Stewart on February 4,
67 1977. The couple has two sons and twin daughters; and

68 WHEREAS, in "The Queen of Basketball," a documentary short
69 that premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in June 2021, Ben



70 Proudfoot tells Lucy's story. The documentary team digitized
71 nearly 10,000 film negatives and 16,000 feet of film to reveal why
72 Lucy was unstoppable on the court. She averaged 25.9 points and
73 14.4 rebounds per game and graduated with 15 Delta State team,
74 single-game and career records. She also led her Alma Mater to a
75 109-6 record; and

76 WHEREAS, Shaquille O'Neal, the former Laker great, got on
77 board as the executive producer when he heard Lucy's story. "I
78 want to honor Miss Harris, you know, by helping her story get out
79 to the world," said O'Neal. "I had no idea who she was and I like
80 to consider myself a basketball aficionado." O'Neal said he was
81 inspired by Harris' story because of all the things that she had
82 to endure. "She made it possible for women to be able to do what
83 they have done today"; and

84 WHEREAS, Lucy Harris was a champion whose staggering
85 statistics are now becoming recognized years later, and it is with
86 great pride that we join the basketball community in recognizing a
87 Mississippi athlete who has brought honor to her community, to her
88 university and to the State of Mississippi:

89 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
90 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
91 we do hereby express the deepest sympathy of the Legislature on
92 the passing of Lusia (Lucy) Harris of Minter City, Mississippi,
93 and remember her legacy as a pioneer of women's basketball on the
94 occasion of the premier of the documentary film "The Queen of



95 Basketball" released in her honor, and extend to the family of
96 Lucy Harris our condolences on her passing.

97 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
98 the surviving family of Lucy Harris, forwarded to the Athletic
99 Department of Delta State University, and be made available to the
100 Capitol Press Corps.

