

By: Senator(s) Branning, Simmons (13th),
Barnett, Butler (38th)

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 549

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY
2 OF THE FOUNDING OF *THE CARTHAGINIAN* NEWSPAPER (1872-2022) IN
3 CARTHAGE, MISSISSIPPI, AND RECOGNIZING ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
4 COMMUNITY AND TO THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI.

5 WHEREAS, we join the citizens of Carthage, Mississippi, in
6 commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the founding of *The*
7 *Carthaginian* Newspaper and recognizing the civic contributions of
8 this leading corporate citizen in our state; and

9 WHEREAS, founded in 1872, *The Carthaginian* printed its first
10 edition in March of that year with L.M. Garrett as
11 Editor-Publisher. He continued in that role, turning what started
12 as a weekly publication, with as few as four pages, into a
13 thriving business and community leader. During his tenure, his
14 daughter, Singleton Garrett, became Editor, the first woman editor
15 of the newspaper and for Leake County, and among the first in
16 Mississippi; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1908, the reins of the newspaper were turned over
18 to Marshall McNeil (Big Mac) Keith, who led the business until
19 1948, establishing a Keith family dynasty with the newspaper that



20 lasted some 105 years. Big Mack relinquished the editor-publisher
21 post to George Huddleston Keith, and he served until 1994, when
22 his son, John Huddleston Keith assumed the position. George Keith
23 was an active leader in the community, steadying the helm through
24 some of the most turbulent times in the state and nation. He also
25 expanded the reach of the company, partnering with W.C. Shoemaker
26 in buying *The Star-Herald* in Kosciusko, Mississippi, and turning
27 it into one of the best weeklies in the south and one of the
28 largest broadsheet printing operation in the Southeast, along with
29 others, such as S. Gale Denley, Jack and Jean Coppenbarger, and
30 Sid Salter in newspapers in Forest, Mendenhall and Pontotoc.
31 George Keith served as President of the Mississippi Press
32 Associations and as a board member; and

33 WHEREAS, after George Keith, Mildred Dearman handled the
34 day-to-day leadership of the Carthage newspaper, until 1994, when
35 John H. Keith assumed command. Mildred Dearman was the second
36 woman to edit the Leake County newspaper and before her death she
37 received local, state and national honors. Starting in 1960, her
38 entire career was spent with the *The Carthaginian*, working in
39 every aspect of the newspaper, and at the same time contributing
40 in all ways to her community. She was President of the
41 Mississippi Press Women (MPW) and served on the Board of Directors
42 of the Mississippi Press Association (MPA) for two terms, and as
43 Vice President. Mildred won every award offered in MPW
44 competition and numerous MPA honors and more than 100 State and



45 National Journalism Awards and for years headed up the MPA Better
46 Newspaper Contests. She was chosen Mississippi Medalist at the
47 University of Southern Mississippi in 1973 and in 1974 was named
48 the Mississippi Press Women's Woman of Achievement. Mildred
49 served two terms, 1964-1965 and 1981-1982, as President of the
50 Leake County Chamber of Commerce and was named Leake County Woman
51 of the Year in 1982. She led efforts to establish an Avenue of
52 American Flags in 1964, then helped revive the display in the
53 1990s. Her efforts on behalf of the Carthage Library were key in
54 funding expansions and improvements. In April, 2005, Dearman was
55 honored by the Old Robinson Road Chapter of the Daughters of the
56 American Revolution with the Woman in American History Award, the
57 only recipient in Mississippi that year. She was the first
58 nominee named by the Old Robinson Road Chapter. A member of
59 Rotary, she was a former member and President of the Carthage PTA
60 and the 20th Century Club. Mildred was a member of Carthage
61 United Methodist Church; and

62 WHEREAS, John Keith positioned *The Carthaginian* for
63 increasing reliance upon and demand for electronic technology. He
64 set the newspaper up with its first website, its first email and
65 social media capabilities, and at one point *The Carthaginian* was
66 likely the only newspaper with capabilities to produce its own
67 page negatives, the exceptions being those newspapers which
68 operated their own presses. He was an active member of the Rotary
69 Club, serving on the board and as President. When downtown



70 Carthage began pushing beautification of the square, he led with a
71 complete face lift for the building front at *The Carthaginian*, and
72 he was instrumental in efforts to expand McMillan Park on Highway
73 16E. He was President of the Leake Academy PTO, plus served on
74 the boards for Leake Academy, the Chamber and for the Mississippi
75 Press Association and Mississippi Press Service; and

76 WHEREAS, in 1994, John Keith sold the newspaper to long-time
77 employee and Editor Waid Prather, a Jackson native whose career
78 had carried him to Kosciusko, Brandon, Canton, Columbia, Amory and
79 Winona in Mississippi, plus two years as Editor and Publisher of
80 the *Marlin Democrat* in Marlin, Texas; and

81 WHEREAS, throughout its career, *The Carthaginian* has won
82 recognition, receiving honors in virtually every category of
83 statewide competition in the Mississippi Press Association. Among
84 those honors are numerous general Excellence Awards, plus three
85 Freedom of Information Awards, including two won in competition
86 against all other newspapers in Mississippi, weekly and daily. In
87 May of 2005, Major General Bill Lutz, Assistant Major General,
88 Commander Mississippi Air National Guard, issued a commendation
89 for *The Carthaginian* for its support of the guard. The
90 commendation recognized an effort to cover guard activities,
91 including implanting Prather with the guard members as they
92 trained in the Mojave Desert prior to deployment to the Middle
93 East in the wake of 9-11, the only Mississippi newspaper to pursue
94 that assignment. A few years later, the newspaper repeated the



95 feat, sending Prather to Fort Hood in Texas, as they prepared for
96 another deployment in the Middle East; and

97 WHEREAS, during Waid Prather's time at the helm, the
98 newspaper led the charge in seeking reopening of the Walnut Grove
99 Correctional Facility, after the Mississippi Department of
100 Corrections (MDOC) canceled a private operator's contract, closing
101 the prison. His criticism of the MDOC and push for information
102 that led to the decision to close the facility were the
103 centerpiece of the paper's third Freedom of Information Award.
104 Prather has served as Director of the Carthage Rotary Club,
105 Director of the Chamber of Commerce, and is a Deacon at Trinity
106 Baptist Church; and

107 WHEREAS, established in 1834, the City of Carthage has been a
108 leading, progressive agricultural community in Central
109 Mississippi, which throughout its history has been supported by
110 the leadership of its most public-spirited corporate citizen, *The*
111 *Carthaginian*, whose civic energy is a wonderful example of
112 excellent journalism in the State of Mississippi:

113 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
114 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
115 we do hereby commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of
116 *The Carthaginian* Newspaper (1872-2022) in Carthage, Mississippi,
117 and recognize its contributions to the community and to the State
118 of Mississippi, and extend our best wishes to the staff of this
119 leading newspaper on this auspicious occasion.



120 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
121 Waid Prather and the staff of *The Carthaginian*, forwarded to the
122 Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of Carthage and made
123 available to the Capitol Press Corps.

