

By: Senator(s) Simmons (12th), Jackson  
(11th), Frazier, Thomas, Norwood, Hickman,  
Simmons (13th), England, Barnett, Branning,  
Butler (38th), Hopson, McDaniel

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 552

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING UNITED STATES DISTRICT  
2 JUDGE OF THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI, DEBRA M. BROWN, AS  
3 MISSISSIPPI'S FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE CHIEF FEDERAL JUDGE.

4 WHEREAS, we join the Mississippi legal community in  
5 congratulating Mississippi State Alumna and United States District  
6 Judge Debra M. Brown as she becomes the Magnolia State's first  
7 African American female Chief Federal Judge. A ceremony was held  
8 on June 11, 2021, at the United States Courthouse in Greenville,  
9 where Judge Brown received the gavel and became the new Chief  
10 Judge of the Northern District of Mississippi. She succeeded  
11 District Judge Sharion Aycock in the role of Chief Judge; and

12 WHEREAS, Judge Brown has served as a District Judge since  
13 being nominated by former President Barack Obama and unanimously  
14 confirmed by the United States Senate in 2013. When Judge Debra  
15 Brown was sworn into office as a District Judge for the Northern  
16 District of Mississippi, she became the first African American  
17 female to serve as a Federal District Judge in Mississippi. Her  
18 investiture as District Judge was also held in Greenville, where



19 her office and courtroom is located, and Senator Roger Wicker  
20 attended the ceremony. Senators Cochran and Wicker had both  
21 strongly supported Judge Brown's nomination, and they both spoke  
22 extensively on her behalf when her nomination was brought before  
23 the full Senate for a vote; and

24 WHEREAS, like the late Senior District Judge William Barbour  
25 and District Judge Carlton Reeves, Judge Debra Brown is a Yazoo  
26 City native. She is one of five sisters, and her parents, Willie  
27 James and Ruthie Brown, had high expectations for each of them.  
28 Judge Brown's college Dean at Mississippi State University  
29 recalled that her key character traits were perseverance,  
30 diligence and focus. After graduating from Mississippi State  
31 University's School of Architecture, she served as a member of the  
32 school's Advisory Council. In her senior year, Judge Brown won  
33 the top Architecture Student Honor, the Alpha Rho Chi Medal.  
34 Judge Brown graduated from the School of Architecture in 1987.  
35 After graduation, she worked as an Architect in Washington, D.C.,  
36 where she participated in the renovation and restoration of  
37 municipal and historic buildings and in the construction of  
38 commercial and residential properties; and

39 WHEREAS, after serving as Associate Articles Editor of the  
40 Mississippi Law Journal, Judge Brown received her law degree from  
41 the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1997. Upon  
42 entering the bar, Judge Brown became the only lawyer in  
43 Mississippi with degrees in both Architecture and Law. In 1997,



44 she joined Phelps Dunbar in Jackson, later becoming a partner at  
45 that firm. In 2012, Judge Brown moved to Wise Carter Child &  
46 Caraway as a shareholder; and

47 WHEREAS, with her background in architecture, it is not  
48 surprising that Judge Brown specialized in commercial construction  
49 litigation, although her civil litigation practice covered a wide  
50 range of topics. During her 16 years in private practice, Judge  
51 Brown was active in several bar associations, including the  
52 American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, the  
53 Federal Bar Association, the Magnolia Bar Association, and the  
54 Mississippi Women Lawyers Association, which she served as  
55 President. She is also a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar  
56 Foundation. In 2004, Judge Brown received the Jackson Young  
57 Lawyers Outstanding Service Award, and in 2008, she was recognized  
58 by the *Mississippi Business Journal* as one of Mississippi's  
59 Leading Businesswomen. Judge Brown also served on the Board of  
60 the Mississippi Center for Justice and Operation Shoestring; and

61 WHEREAS, at her investiture, Judge Brown took the oath of  
62 office with her hand on a Bible held by her mother, Ruthie Brown.  
63 In her remarks to the assembly, she said, "I do not take lightly  
64 the historical significance of this moment in Mississippi history,  
65 and I am acutely aware of the magnitude of this judicial position  
66 and the responsibility that goes along with it. I promise you  
67 that I will at all times give it the respect it deserves and  
68 approach it with humility. I will approach every decision I make



69 on the bench with reverence for the law and those who come before  
70 me and will strive always to achieve fairness and excellence every  
71 day"; and

72 WHEREAS, Judge Brown's appointment as Chief Judge is the  
73 crowning achievement of an outstanding legal career which has  
74 honored both the Mississippi legal community and the State of  
75 Mississippi, which she serves:

76 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
77 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That  
78 we do hereby recognize United States District Judge of the  
79 Northern District of Mississippi, Debra M. Brown, as Mississippi's  
80 first African American female Chief Federal Judge, and extend our  
81 best wishes on this auspicious occasion.

82 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
83 Chief Judge Debra Brown and her family, forwarded to the Federal  
84 District Court of the Northern District of Mississippi and  
85 Mississippi's Congressional delegation, and be made available to  
86 the Capitol Press Corps.

