

By: Representatives Miles, Banks

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 37

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND HONORING THE AMAZING LIFE AND
2 IMPRESSIVE LEGACY OF ATTORNEY CONSTANCE SLAUGHTER-HARVEY FOR BEING
3 A HISTORIC TRAILBLAZING ATTORNEY, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, COMMUNITY
4 LEADER, AND TREASURED MENTOR WHO HAS INSPIRED COUNTLESS WOMEN AND
5 MEN.

6 WHEREAS, Attorney Constance Slaughter-Harvey is a living
7 legal icon who is best known as the first African-American female
8 to earn a law degree from the University of Mississippi during a
9 tortuous time in Mississippi's history, and has since then
10 accumulated numerous other firsts, including being the first
11 African-American judge in Mississippi, while also serving as a
12 living symbol of hope and inspiration for generations of female
13 and male lawyers throughout this state and this nation; and

14 WHEREAS, Attorney Slaughter-Harvey's historic relevance lauds
15 her alongside other dynamic, aspirational female history makers,
16 such as Fannie Lou Hamer and Evelyn Gandy; and

17 WHEREAS, born in Jackson, Mississippi, on June 18, 1946, and
18 raised as one of six daughters to Mr. Willie L. Slaughter and
19 Olivia Kelly Slaughter, both of whom were educators and civil



20 rights pioneers, a young Constance graduated as valedictorian of
21 the segregated E.T. Hawkins High School and enrolled at Tougaloo
22 College in 1963, where she met the revolutionary civil rights
23 leader Medgar Evers; and

24 WHEREAS, when her friend Medgar was murdered in June 1963,
25 the values instilled by her parents and the racial injustices she
26 witnessed motivated Constance to join the Civil Rights Movement;
27 and

28 WHEREAS, on January 27, 1970, she became the first
29 African-American female to receive a law degree from the
30 University of Mississippi, and after graduation, she joined the
31 Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law as a staff attorney
32 and worked there until 1972, when she returned to Forest and
33 established her private law practice, and she served as Executive
34 Director of the Southern Legal Rights and later became Director of
35 East Mississippi Legal Services; and

36 WHEREAS, in 1980, she joined the staff of Governor William
37 Winter as Director of Human Development, and in 1984, became
38 Assistant Secretary of State for Elections and Public Lands with
39 Secretary of State, Dick Molpus and together, she and Molpus
40 reformed Sixteenth Section School and Public Trust Lands, and
41 lobbied for Mail-In Voter Registration which was signed into law
42 on April 1, 1991; and

43 WHEREAS, Attorney Slaughter-Harvey led the fight for Motor
44 Voter Registration and became a member of the National Motor Voter



45 Advisory Board, and in 1991, she was promoted to General Counsel
46 and continued to serve as Assistant Secretary of Elections; and

47 WHEREAS, in 1995, Attorney Slaughter-Harvey became the
48 Coordinator of the Mississippi State Democratic Party and was
49 responsible for the campaigns of all Democratic candidates in the
50 state, but returned to her law practice in 1996, to become
51 President of Elections, Inc.; and

52 WHEREAS, driven by her passion to lay a positive, strong
53 foundation for the future, she created the Slaughter Memorial that
54 provides programs in after-school tutorial and enhancement,
55 abstinance, and several other youth initiatives, and served as
56 president in a number of organizations that provide services to
57 underserved communities; and

58 WHEREAS, from 2004 to 2007, Attorney Slaughter-Harvey was
59 involved in nursing home trial litigation across the state, and
60 later began serving as the Scott County Youth Court Prosecutor
61 while she passionately improved the options for youth in
62 Mississippi until she retired at the age of 76 in June of this
63 year; and

64 WHEREAS, for 35 years, she also found time to honor her
65 college alma mater, Tougaloo College, by serving as an Adjunct
66 Professor and was rewarded for her sacrifice with the
67 establishment of the *Constance Slaughter-Harvey Endowed Chair in*
68 *Political Science/Pre-Law at Tougaloo College* by friends, Banker,
69 Thomas Colbert and wife, Ann; and



70 WHEREAS, throughout her career, Constance has been celebrated
71 with awards, honors and prestigious recognitions totaling over
72 5,000 to date; and

73 WHEREAS, a few of her honors include awards from the National
74 Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Mississippi
75 Women Lawyers, the Mississippi Bar Association, the American Bar
76 Association, naming the Black Law Students Association at the
77 University of Mississippi in her honor, receiving the University
78 of Mississippi's Public Service Award; and

79 WHEREAS, throughout all of her tremendously historic and
80 meaningful endeavors, she has been lovingly supported by her
81 husband, James Arthur Burwell, daughter, Constance Olivia, and
82 son, James Arthur III; and

83 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
84 honor and celebrate the legacies of living historic icons, such as
85 Attorney Constance Slaughter-Harvey, who has left and continues to
86 leave a positive imprint in every endeavor she undertakes:

87 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
88 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
89 commend and honor the amazing life and legacy of Attorney
90 Constance Slaughter-Harvey for being a historic trailblazing
91 attorney, civil rights activist, community leader and treasured
92 mentor who has inspired countless women, men and children.



93 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
94 furnished to Attorney Constance Slaughter-Harvey and to the
95 members of the Capitol Press Corps.

