

By: Representative Roberson

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 192

1           A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE ESTEEMED, LAUDABLE AND PIONEERING  
 2 LEGISLATIVE CAREER AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE MOST HONORABLE AND  
 3 DISTINGUISHED LADY FROM HINDS, REPRESENTATIVE ALYCE GRIFFIN CLARKE  
 4 UPON THE SPECIAL OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT FROM THE MISSISSIPPI  
 5 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

6           WHEREAS, the lovely, honorable and distinguished Lady from  
 7 Hinds, Representative Alyce Griffin Clarke, a true champion of  
 8 District 69, who has not only worked tirelessly for her district -  
 9 District 69, Hinds County, and this great state as a whole, is  
 10 retiring after 38 years of invaluable service that has positively  
 11 changed the lives of Mississippians; and

12           WHEREAS, Representative Clarke, who is a political  
 13 trailblazer and pioneer in her own right as she is the first  
 14 African-American woman elected to the Mississippi Legislature,  
 15 serves as a living legend who continues to inspire young women and  
 16 men as she has left an admired ingrained mark in her public  
 17 service; and

18           WHEREAS, the roots of Representative Clarke's journey to  
 19 greatness began as a child in the small community of Deovelente,



20 Mississippi, in Humphreys County, where she was reared in love by  
21 her parents, Mr. Henry Griffin and Mrs. Fannie Alice Merriweather  
22 Griffin, who reared her with a staunch work ethic, which she has  
23 applied throughout her wonderfully blessed life; and

24 WHEREAS, Representative Clarke, who is affectionally referred  
25 to as "Myrt" by her family and close friends due to her middle  
26 name being Myrtle, graduated from McNair High School in 1957, in  
27 Belzoni, Mississippi, and notably, she went on to earn a  
28 bachelor's degree in home economics in 1961 from her beloved  
29 Alcorn State University (ASU), which she is known to show her  
30 adoration for adorning purple and gold attire on a frequent basis;  
31 and

32 WHEREAS, in addition to earning a degree from ASU,  
33 Representative Clarke earned a master's degree from Tuskegee  
34 Institute in home economics with an emphasis in nutrition in 1965,  
35 and she has also had additional studies at Jackson State  
36 University and Mississippi College, which speaks to her love of  
37 education; and

38 WHEREAS, before assuming her role as an esteemed legislator,  
39 Representative Clarke helped her community by serving as an  
40 instructor for the Washington County Public School District (1962-  
41 1970); served with Mississippi Action for Progress - Head Start  
42 (1970-1972); Director of Nutrition and WIC Services - Jackson-  
43 Hinds Comprehensive Health Center (1972-1987) and notably, in that



44 role as director, she is responsible for implementing the first  
45 WIC program in the state; and

46 WHEREAS, after Representative Clarke was elected to the  
47 Legislature, she continued to make contributions as a valuable  
48 team member with New York Life Insurance Company (1985-2000) and  
49 Improving the Quality of Life Consulting Services (1995-2005); and

50 WHEREAS, although Representative Clarke made priceless  
51 contributions to her community before being elected, upon her  
52 election to the House of Representatives in March of 1985 in a  
53 special election, she became the distinguished Lady from Hinds  
54 upon being sworn into office and wasted no time requesting the  
55 legislation, amendments and reports that would not only help her  
56 constituents in District 69 but also help this great state as a  
57 whole; and

58 WHEREAS, upon being elected, Representative Clarke faced  
59 certain challenges upon her arrival to the House because she was  
60 the only female African American in the Legislature, and one such  
61 challenge was that her fellow female colleagues did not inform her  
62 that they had a special restroom for their use; and

63 WHEREAS, undaunted by her exclusion from the special restroom  
64 for her white female colleagues, Representative Clarke, who is  
65 known for ensuring that all people are treated equally, made sure  
66 that more restrooms for women were placed throughout the Capitol,  
67 which is truly an enduring legacy that benefits women who work and  
68 visit our beautiful Capitol; and



69           WHEREAS, Representative Clarke has served in various  
70 leadership roles in the House of Representatives, which are as  
71 follows: Vice Chair of the Drug Policy Committee (2016-2020);  
72 Vice Chair of the Education Committee (2012-2016); Chair of the  
73 Ethics Committee (2008-2012); Vice Chair of the Interstate  
74 Cooperation Committee (1988-1995); Chair of the PEER Committee  
75 (1995-1996); Chair of the State Library Committee (2000-2004) and  
76 Vice Chair of the Ways and Means Committee (1996-2000); and

77           WHEREAS, in addition to her leadership roles as chair and  
78 vice chair throughout her nearly 40 years in the House of  
79 Representatives, Representative Clarke has served as a  
80 contributing member in other legislative committees such as:  
81 Banks and Banking; County Affairs; Public Health and Welfare;  
82 Municipalities; Juvenile Justice; Judiciary B; Universities and  
83 Colleges; Appropriations; Tourism; Youth and Family Affairs;  
84 Banking and Financial Services and Gaming; and

85           WHEREAS, not one to limit her community involvement to the  
86 Legislature, Representative Clarke has always been active in  
87 District 69 and dedicated to improving the quality of life for all  
88 as evidenced by her service with various entities such as: Pecan  
89 Tree Park Neighborhood Association, president; Jackson Takes a  
90 Stand (Jackson State University) Advisory Council; Board of  
91 Directors of Southeastern Regional Visions for Education; founder  
92 of Born Free; member of New Hope Foundation; Connecting the Dots;  
93 National Multiple Sclerosis Society; Alcorn State University



94 Alumni Association; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Mississippi  
95 Infant Mortality Task Force; West Central Jackson Improvement  
96 Association; National Association for the Advancement of Colored  
97 People; National Association of Community Health Centers; National  
98 Association of Drug Court Professionals; Jack and Jill of America,  
99 Inc.; Mississippi Public Health Association; Regional Association  
100 of Drug Free Schools and Communities and State PTA; and

101 WHEREAS, due to her leadership, Representative Clarke has  
102 been recognized with various awards, some of which include: WIC  
103 Nutrition Coordinator of the Year (1985); Alcornite of the Year  
104 (1987); Fannie Lou Hamer Award (1987); Medgar Evers Award (1987);  
105 Outstanding Volunteers Award (1992); Policymakers Leadership Award  
106 (1995); University of Mississippi's Award of Distinction (1997);  
107 Women's History Month Legacy Award (1997) as well as being honored  
108 at the 2023 annual luncheon held by Sisters Taking Action and  
109 Nurturing Decision-Makers (S.T.A.N.D.) - just to name a few; and

110 WHEREAS, notably, as a mark of her steadfastness in state  
111 government, Representative Clarke, during her nearly four decades  
112 in the House, served under seven governors, beginning with Bill  
113 Allain, seven lieutenant governors, beginning with Brad Dye and  
114 four House speakers, beginning with Buddie Newman; and

115 WHEREAS, Representative Clarke has introduced over 1,500  
116 bills and one of the highlights of her successful legislative  
117 career was a bill she introduced in 1986 entitled Born Free Act,  
118 and from this act, which stemmed from her work with women, infants



119 and children, is currently operated as Born Free/New Beginnings by  
120 Catholic Charities; and

121 WHEREAS, Representative Clarke also authored a bill creating  
122 Mississippi's International Baccalaureate Diploma program, and in  
123 2003, after years of advocacy for a more comprehensive  
124 rehabilitative approach for criminal defendants who committed  
125 crimes while under the influence of alcohol/drugs, the Alyce  
126 Griffin Clarke Drug Court Act, Senate Bill 2605, was passed; and

127 WHEREAS, in 2018, after 19 years of pursuing a lottery law,  
128 the Alyce G. Clarke Mississippi Lottery Law, Senate Bill 2001,  
129 from the 1st Extraordinary Session of 2018, was signed into law,  
130 which authorized the first \$80 million in annual lottery proceeds  
131 to go to infrastructure and anything beyond that amount goes to  
132 education; and

133 WHEREAS, additionally, in 2019, House Bill 1160 was signed  
134 into law, and in this legislation, Mississippi's first pediatric  
135 palliative care center was established and due to the work of  
136 Representative Clarke and her love for children, the facility will  
137 be named the Alyce G. Clarke Center for Medically Fragile  
138 Children; and

139 WHEREAS, in addition to having legislation and a medical  
140 facility named in her honor, Representative Clarke is depicted on  
141 a mural entitled "Chain Breakers", on Jackson State University's  
142 COFO Civil Rights Education Building, where she, along with five  
143 other civil rights legends, one of which is Fannie Lou Hamer, are



144 forever memorialized - a well-deserved honor as she blazed a path  
145 for equality; and

146 WHEREAS, as one who is known for her trademark greeting of "I  
147 am blessed and how are you," and who has governed and led by her  
148 Christian values, Representative Clarke's genesis of the  
149 instillment of her Christian values stem from Shiloh Missionary  
150 Baptist Church, where she was baptized, and her values have  
151 blossomed as a dedicated member of Cade Chapel Missionary Baptist  
152 Church, where she served as an usher or gatekeeper for the House  
153 of the Lord for 34 years; and

154 WHEREAS, the service of Representative Clarke would be  
155 without honor but for the continued support, encouragement and  
156 love of her family, which included her husband of 32 years, Mr.  
157 Lee William Clarke, who was her number one cheerleader until his  
158 passing in 2004, and their successful son, DeMarquis Clarke, both  
159 of whom sacrificed countless hours without her in order that she  
160 could fulfill her legislative obligations; and

161 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to  
162 honor the indelible legacy of remarkable service of our colleague  
163 and friend, Representative Alyce Griffin Clarke, who represented  
164 District 69, Hinds County, this body and the people of this state  
165 with honor and intrepid dignity for 38 years:

166 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
167 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby  
168 commend the most honorable, distinguished Lady from Hinds,



169 Representative Alyce Griffin Clarke, for her esteemed and laudable  
170 legislative career and public service, and express fondest respect  
171 and best wishes for continued success in all her future endeavors.

172 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
173 furnished to Representative Alyce G. Clarke and to the members of  
174 the Capitol Press Corps.

