

By: Representative Holloway

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 195

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 this act, which stemmed from her work with women, infants and



119 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.

