

By: Senator(s) Polk, Fillingane, Johnson,
Barnett, Butler (38th), Frazier, McDaniel,
Thompson

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 526

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE LEADERSHIP AND HIGHER
2 EDUCATION SERVICE OF FORMER WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT DR.
3 TOMMY KING ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AND COMMENDING HIS
4 OUTSTANDING 60-YEAR CAREER.

5 WHEREAS, on July 26, 2022, upon retiring after a 60-year
6 career at William Carey University, including 15 years as
7 university president, Dr. Tommy King was honored with a retirement
8 reception at the building that was named after and dedicated to
9 him in 2021; and

10 WHEREAS, including his tenure as president, Dr. King spent
11 six decades on the Carey campus. Those years include service as a
12 campus leader while a student, as a Carey trustee, an adjunct
13 professor, a department chair and an executive vice president; and

14 WHEREAS, one of King's first major challenges as president
15 came in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which destroyed the
16 university's first Gulf Coast campus. After that, he chose the
17 location and developed the construction of the new Tradition
18 campus on the Gulf Coast; and



19 WHEREAS, during that time, the university applied to open the
20 WCU College of Osteopathic Medicine, which admitted its first
21 class of 2010 at the Hattiesburg campus; and

22 WHEREAS, another challenge came in January 2017, when an EF-3
23 tornado tore through Hattiesburg and Petal and wreaked havoc on
24 the Hattiesburg campus, destroying six buildings and leaving only
25 one untouched. One of the destroyed buildings was the original
26 Tatum Court, for which King led the rebuilding effort and cut the
27 ribbon on the restored Tatum Court in July 2019. Tatum Court is
28 the 21st-century version of the original administration building,
29 which had stood in the same place from 1914 to 2017; and

30 WHEREAS, Dr. King was instrumental in establishing the School
31 of Pharmacy on the Tradition campus, a physical therapy doctoral
32 program in Hattiesburg, and a new nursing school in Baton Rouge.
33 He also led the way to the construction of a new 67,000 square
34 foot facility for the College of Health Sciences, the largest
35 complex WCU has ever built. The most recent ribbon-cutting was
36 for the King Student Center, named in honor of King and his wife,
37 Sandra; and

38 WHEREAS, during King's tenure, the university saw
39 unprecedented growth in enrollment, with the number of students
40 more than doubling from 2,500 to more than 5,200. During the same
41 time, the number of residential students in Hattiesburg has
42 increased four-fold and six new dorms have been opened; and



43 WHEREAS, a new Lucile Parker Gallery was built on campus
44 after the original building, which sat just outside campus, was
45 destroyed. The Sarah Gillespie Galley also was severely damaged
46 and had to undergo major repairs. The university has a third
47 museum, the William Carey Center, which is dedicated to the life
48 and work of the university's namesake. During King's tenure, the
49 university also has invested in the community, purchasing 141
50 properties. The local chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity
51 gave King the Bridge Builder Award during the annual Martin Luther
52 King, Jr. prayer breakfast, which he says is one of his favorite
53 awards because it recognizes his contributions to Hattiesburg.
54 Another favorite is the Hub Award, which also recognizes community
55 enhancement. In addition to strengthening community programs and
56 rebuilding campuses, King has focused on increasing the
57 university's endowment. One of the things King is most proud of
58 is the number of students attending chapel every week; and

59 WHEREAS, for over 60 years, Dr. Tommy King has had an
60 association with William Carey University. He was a student,
61 worked there for 23 years, and became the first graduate of his
62 alma mater to be president of William Carey; and

63 WHEREAS, Dr. King is succeeded by Dr. Ben Burnett who stated,
64 "For 15 years, Dr. King served in a selfless, humble and visionary
65 manner, and we so appreciate all of his work. The Carey family
66 has great appreciation for all of his leadership and to William
67 Carey University and to the State of Mississippi":



68 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
69 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
70 we do hereby recognize the leadership and higher education service
71 of former William Carey University President Dr. Tommy King on the
72 occasion on his retirement and commend his outstanding 60-year
73 career and thank Dr. King and his family for his legacy of service
74 to the University and to the State of Mississippi.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
76 Dr. Tommy King and his family, forwarded to the Board of Trustees
77 of William Carey University and made available to the Capitol
78 Press Corps.

