

By: Senator(s) Blount, Wiggins, England,
Barnett, Branning, Brumfield, Frazier,
Hopson, Horhn, Michel, Parker, Thomas, Whaley

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 506

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE SINCEREST SYMPATHY OF
2 THE MISSISSIPPI SENATE TO THE SURVIVING FAMILY OF FORMER
3 MISSISSIPPI SENATOR, CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC WELFARE
4 AND RESPECTED TRIAL LAWYER JOHN G. CORLEW OF JACKSON COUNTY,
5 MISSISSIPPI, AND COMMENDING HIS SERVICE TO HIS COMMUNITY AND HIS
6 STATE.

7 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of
8 former State Senator John G. Corlew on December 6, 2023; and

9 WHEREAS, John's colorful life began on July 13, 1943, in
10 Dyersburg, Tennessee. At an early age, he moved with his family
11 to Pascagoula, Mississippi, where he spent a happy childhood with
12 his brother and a fun-loving group of Jackson County friends.
13 John's brilliant intellect and strong work ethic earned him a
14 four-year scholarship to Ole Miss. He graduated with a Journalism
15 degree in 1964 after a memorable college career full of accolades
16 and leadership roles. He served as Editor of the *Daily*
17 *Mississippian*. In that role and also on behalf of the *Associated*
18 *Press*, he covered pivotal events in the state's Civil Rights
19 struggles of the 1960s. He was a lifetime devoted member of the
20 Sigma Nu fraternity. His first political campaign, which he won,



21 was for Student Body President at Ole Miss. He was later named to
22 the Ole Miss Hall of Fame; and

23 WHEREAS, John returned to Tennessee to attend Vanderbilt
24 University Law School, where he graduated as one of the top two
25 students in his class. He was Managing Editor of the *Law Review*
26 in 1967-1968. In 1967, he married Lee Scott, whom he had met at
27 Ole Miss. After law school, John returned home to Mississippi.
28 He served as law clerk to the Honorable Walter Nixon in 1968-1969,
29 and joined the law firm of Megehee, Brown, and Williams in 1970
30 and eventually became a senior partner at Corlew, Krebs and
31 Hammond. John was active in local civic and community life
32 through the Jaycees and the Methodist Church. He quickly became
33 the go-to lawyer for major industries on the coast and nationwide;
34 and

35 WHEREAS, in 1974, Jackson County elected John to the
36 Mississippi Senate. He served in the Legislature from 1974-1980.
37 It was an important time of legislative progress, and despite his
38 young age, he was an important player. He and a group of other
39 young progressive legislators, with help from allies like
40 Lieutenant Governor "Miss Evelyn" Gandy, organized to pass
41 significant legislation which permanently reformed and modernized
42 Mississippi law. They steered passage of Open Meetings, Open
43 Records and other laws which increased transparency and public
44 access to public proceedings. John presided as Chairman of the
45 Appropriations Committee in 1979, served on the Legislative Audit



46 Committee in 1978, and the Constitution Committee from 1975 to
47 1979. Appointed by Governor Winter, Senator Corlew served as
48 Chairman of the State Board of Public Welfare from 1980 to 1984;
49 and

50 WHEREAS, in 1984, Jackson lawyer Bill Goodman persuaded John
51 and Lee to move to Jackson so John could join Bill at the Watkins
52 & Eager law firm. John was a leading partner there until 2009
53 when he again established a small independent firm, Corlew,
54 Munford & Smith. He continued there until 2021, when he joined
55 the Oxford-based law firm of Mayo Mallette until his retirement;
56 and

57 WHEREAS, John's professional accolades were many. He was a
58 Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, the American College of
59 Trial Lawyers and the Mississippi Bar Foundation. He was a member
60 of the Order of the Coif, an honor society for United States law
61 school graduates. He received the Professionalism Award from the
62 Hinds County Bar Association in 2007, and also from the
63 Mississippi Bar Foundation in 2013. He was a Member of the
64 Charles Clark Inns of Court. John was recognized in *The Best*
65 *Lawyers in America* for bet-the-company litigation and his
66 commercial, mass tort, environmental, and banking and finance
67 litigation work. He was also listed as one of Mississippi's top
68 50 lawyers by Mid-South Super Lawyers and was recognized by
69 Chambers USA as a leading lawyer for commercial litigation and
70 environmental work; and



71 WHEREAS, Senator Corlew was the author of two books on
72 Mississippi trial practice: *The Mississippi Jury: Law and*
73 *Practice and Damages Law for Mississippi Trial Practice.* John
74 also served on the Lawyers Advisory Committee for the U.S. Court
75 of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit from 2001 to 2004, the Governor's
76 Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee from 2004 to 2012, and
77 the Committee on Judicial Elections Campaign Intervention from
78 2014 to 2015; and

79 WHEREAS, John was a passionate sports fan, especially soccer
80 in recent years. He took his family to Europe for the World Cup
81 soccer games in 2006 and was a devoted fan of professional soccer.
82 He coached each of his children's soccer, basketball, and softball
83 teams and maintained relationships with many of those young
84 players as they grew up and faced adult challenges; and

85 WHEREAS, while John loved the practice of law and his other
86 professional endeavors, he considered his greatest achievement to
87 be his family. His marriage to Lee lasted until his death and
88 together they raised three children, all of whom survive him:
89 Scott Corlew (Melanie); Heath Corlew; and Carey Bhalla (Sonu).
90 Other survivors are John's five beloved grandchildren: Jac, Meg,
91 Ann Scott, Latham and Emily. He was immensely proud of all of
92 them, and their adventures supplied him with fresh stories to tell
93 his friends; and

94 WHEREAS, John served as a leader and mentor. He consistently
95 lectured on professional standards of the practice, including



96 ethics, integrity, civility, courtesy and adherence to the Golden
97 Rule. He advised his colleagues: "One only has so many points of
98 Personal Privilege, use them wisely." John's life honored both
99 The Mississippi Bar and this great state that he loved and served:

100 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
101 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
102 we do hereby extend the sincerest sympathy of the Mississippi
103 Senate to the surviving family of former Mississippi Senator,
104 Chairman of the State Board of Public Welfare and respected trial
105 Lawyer John G. Corlew of Jackson County, Mississippi, and commend
106 his service to his community and his state.

107 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
108 the surviving family of former Senator John G. Corlew, forwarded
109 to The Mississippi Bar, and be made available to the Capitol Press
110 Corps.

