

By: Senator(s) Simmons (12th), Blount, Boyd, Branning, Frazier, McCaughn, Norwood, Sparks, Thompson, Suber To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 515

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE PASSING AND RECOGNIZING  
2 THE SIGNIFICANT JUDICIAL CAREER OF FORMER MISSISSIPPI SUPREME  
3 COURT JUSTICE JAMES L. ROBERTSON.

4 WHEREAS, we join the Mississippi legal profession in  
5 recognizing the record of service of former Mississippi Supreme  
6 Court Justice James L. Robertson (83) who passed away on December  
7 10, 2023; and

8 WHEREAS, Justice James L. Robertson was born in Greenwood,  
9 Mississippi, on July 30, 1940. He grew up in his beloved hometown  
10 of Greenville; and

11 WHEREAS, the Delta city is where the seeds of Justice  
12 Robertson's professional journey were planted as a cub sports  
13 reporter for the *Delta Democrat Times*, whose legendary editor  
14 Hodding Carter, Jr., was an early mentor. After graduating from  
15 Greenville High School, Robertson set off to Ole Miss and rose to  
16 become Editor-In-Chief of the *Daily Mississippian*. In this  
17 position, he challenged the school's approach to race-related



18 matters. Robertson would go on to be inducted into the Ole Miss  
19 Hall of Fame; and

20 WHEREAS, Robertson's journalism career got sidetracked when  
21 he was admitted to Harvard Law School. In 1965, he earned his  
22 Juris Doctor degree from Harvard. Upon graduation, he returned to  
23 Greenville, where he joined the firm of Keady, Campbell and  
24 Delong, later Campbell and Delong. Robertson had an extensive  
25 trial practice representing school boards, farmers, maritime  
26 concerns, and various businesses and corporate clients, and he  
27 represented individuals from all walks of life. He felt a duty to  
28 seek justice for those who were underserved, a commitment he  
29 attributed to the example set by his parents, Susie and L.D.  
30 Robertson; and

31 WHEREAS, in 1983, Governor William Winter appointed Robertson  
32 to fill a vacancy on the Mississippi Supreme Court, after which he  
33 was elected for a full eight-year term. Often exhibiting a  
34 literary flair, he authored nearly 800 opinions - majority,  
35 concurring and dissenting; and

36 WHEREAS, from 1977 to 1992, Robertson was a member of the  
37 faculty of the University of Mississippi School of Law. "Judge  
38 Jimmy," as he was known, was devoted to his students. He wanted  
39 them to know how much he valued them and hoped that his teaching  
40 efforts were beneficial to their future careers. He wished to be  
41 remembered for the wisdom he imparted on the last day of class.



42 This lecture eventually became a 1983 *Mississippi Law Review*  
43 article, "The Lawyer as Hero"; and

44 WHEREAS, upon leaving the Supreme Court in 1992, Robertson  
45 spent a semester in Manhattan as visiting professor at Fordham  
46 University School of Law. In January 1993, he returned to private  
47 practice as a shareholder with Wise, Carter, Child & Caraway in  
48 Jackson, where he forged many professional friendships and enjoyed  
49 mentoring young associates and law clerks as they began their  
50 careers. At Wise Carter, he engaged in a general trial practice  
51 for 25 years; and

52 WHEREAS, a prolific writer, Robertson published numerous  
53 scholarly articles. An authority on the Mississippi Constitution,  
54 he wrote an entire volume on that topic in the *Encyclopedia of*  
55 *Mississippi Law*. He also authored two books of more general  
56 appeal, *Heroes, Rascals, and the Law* (2019) and *Rowdy Boundaries*  
57 (2023), published by the University Press of Mississippi. The  
58 Capital Area Bar Association newsletter was a favorite outlet for  
59 his musings, particularly his reviews of major league baseball  
60 parks; and

61 WHEREAS, he considered his most significant professional  
62 affiliation to be his life membership in the American Law  
63 Institute, and he contributed to the revered Restatements of the  
64 Law. He was a Fellow of the American Bar Association and of The  
65 Mississippi Bar and a member of the American Inns of Court and  
66 numerous other professional organizations. He was also a board



67 member of the Innocence Project New Orleans and the Mississippi  
68 Innocence Project at Ole Miss Law School and actively supported  
69 their work to seek justice for the victims of wrongful  
70 convictions; and

71 WHEREAS, for all his academic and professional  
72 accomplishments, Robertson showed the same zeal for his private  
73 interests. An enthusiastic jogger, he ran countless races in  
74 cities from New York to San Francisco. A lover of the opera, he  
75 traversed the country following performances of his favorites,  
76 especially Wagner, and he was President of the Mississippi Opera  
77 Association in 1996-97. An ardent sports fanatic, Robertson  
78 relished any opportunity to talk about seeing Ted Williams and  
79 Bill Russell play in person, or how he was in the press box to  
80 watch Johnny Vaught's greatest football teams and in the stands  
81 for the Billy Cannon punt return; and

82 WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife, Linda Thompson  
83 Robertson; three sons, Rob (Jenny), Lamar (Lauren) and Chris  
84 Robertson; a brother, Dr. L.D. Robertson (Julie); two sisters, Dr.  
85 Lucie Bridgforth and Bonnie Gardner (T.Y.); and five  
86 grandchildren; and

87 WHEREAS, Justice Robertson leaves a great legacy of serving  
88 the public, the legal profession and the administration of justice  
89 over the span of his professional career. His love, commitment  
90 and lasting impact on his family, Mississippi jurisprudence and  
91 the State of Mississippi will be missed:



92           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
93 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That  
94 we do hereby mourn the passing and recognize the significant  
95 judicial career of former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice James  
96 L. Robinson, and express the sympathy of the Legislature and our  
97 thanks for sharing James L. Robertson with us and with the State  
98 of Mississippi.

99           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
100 the family of Justice Robertson, forwarded to the Mississippi  
101 Supreme Court and The Mississippi Bar, and be made available to  
102 the Capitol Press Corps.

