

By: Senator(s) Horhn, Blackmon, Blount,
Butler, Chassaniol, Frazier, McLendon,
Michel, Robinson, Simmons (13th), Simmons
(12th), Thomas, Norwood

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 17

1 A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE RECOGNITION OF THE MISSISSIPPI
2 SENATE TO THE LEGACY AND COMMUNITY SERVICE OF JANE CRATER HIATT OF
3 JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2025 GOVERNOR'S ARTS
4 AWARD FOR "STEPHEN C. EDDS" PATRON OF THE ARTS.

5 WHEREAS, the Governor's Arts Awards Program has announced its
6 2025 recipients, which include Jane Crater Hiatt of Jackson,
7 Mississippi, for the 2025 Governor's Arts Award for "Stephen C.
8 Edds" Patron of the Arts; and

9 WHEREAS, established in 1988, Governor's Arts Awards are
10 given to individuals and organizations to recognize outstanding
11 work in the artistic disciplines as well as arts-based community
12 development and arts patronage in Mississippi. The awards are
13 presented in partnership with the Governor's Office and signify
14 the important relationship between government and the arts; and

15 WHEREAS, Jane Crater Hiatt is a retired Arts Administrator
16 and ongoing arts patron who has left an indelible mark on the
17 cultural landscape of Mississippi; and

18 WHEREAS, Jane received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the
19 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she was named a



member of Phi Beta Kappa. She received her master's degree from Wake Forest University; and

WHEREAS, she began her Mississippi career at the Mississippi Humanities Council. She was quickly tapped to lead the Arts Alliance of Jackson and Hinds County (now the Greater Jackson Arts Council), where she built a professional team of arts administrators and educators who embedded arts programs within the Jackson Public School system and Hinds County. In 1987, she established the highly successful Jubilee JAM! (Jackson Arts and Music Festival), which annually filled all downtown Jackson with up to 70,000 people, live music and visual artist vendors for over 20 years; and

WHEREAS, during her time at the Arts Alliance, Hiatt became actively involved in the civic life of Jackson. In 1988, she was a member of the first class of Leadership Jackson. Hiatt participated actively in its diversity and racial reconciliation programs, living up to her values of equity and inclusion throughout the rest of her professional and personal life. Far ahead of her time, Hiatt insisted that her boards and staff, wherever she worked, were representative of the constituencies they served, and thus, the public support of her work followed her wherever she landed; and

WHEREAS, after five years leading the state's largest local arts council, Hiatt was hired to lead the Mississippi Arts Commission, a position she held for six years. At the MAC, Hiatt



professionalized the grants program and created a Blue Ribbon Task Force to assess the state of arts education across Mississippi and recommend strategies to fill the gaps. She began the Whole Schools Program which has continued to grow and impact students, teachers, and communities since its inauguration in one school in Tupelo during her tenure. Again, instilling her values of inclusion into MAC's staff and programs, Hiatt insisted on racial, gender, and geographic diversity in grant panels, award recipients, and commissioners. Hiatt reinvigorated and elevated the Governor's Arts Awards as an annual celebration of the highest caliber, garnering private and political support and attracting nationally acclaimed artists back to their home state; and

WHEREAS, during Hiatt's tenure at MAC, federal support for the arts through the NEA was threatened by the culture wars of the 1990s, instigated by federal grant awards to individual artists whose work some members of Congress found objectionable. Hiatt, highly respected in her field, was summoned to testify before Congress on the value of public arts funding. While the NEA survived, artist fellowships at the federal level did not. Hiatt, however, insisted that MAC would continue to fund artists directly because of her deep belief that artists are essential to the fabric of public life and her understanding of the impact unrestricted funding can have on an artistic career; and

WHEREAS, when Hiatt retired in 1995, she did not abandon her commitment to the arts and artists. She joined the Board of the



70 Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) and served as its interim director
71 in 2001. Having established one of the first donor-advised funds
72 of the Community Foundation for Mississippi and the Mississippi
73 Women's Foundation, she continued her grantmaking support as a
74 private philanthropist; and

75 WHEREAS, her chosen beneficiaries again included arts
76 organizations throughout the state, such as the Mississippi Folk
77 Arts Alliance and the Mississippi Book Festival. In 2003, she
78 became the sole funder of the Mississippi Museum of Art's
79 Mississippi Invitational, a biennial exhibition displaying the
80 works of artists practicing in Mississippi. More than 220
81 Mississippi artists have exhibited works at the Invitational, and
82 prestigious curators have visited these artists in their studios,
83 offering constructive support and contacts to advance their
84 careers; and

85 WHEREAS, not satisfied with funding the exhibition only, in
86 2005, Hiatt established the Jane Crater Hiatt Artist Fellowship,
87 now funded at \$20,000, to one outstanding artist so that the
88 artist can carve out time to travel and study and, in Hiatt's
89 words, find the inspiration they need to advance to the next level
90 of their careers. The impact of this support on the nine
91 recipients thus far is incalculable. Artists have traveled from
92 China to Florence, found new materials and new techniques, studied
93 with their artistic idols, and continued to fill Mississippi



94 communities with their studio practices that benefit students,
95 collectors, and museum visitors alike; and

96 WHEREAS, Hiatt's deep generosity, her keen and strategic
97 philanthropy, and her leadership and advocacy have continued to
98 inform the cultural landscape of Mississippi through financial
99 support, mentorships of a generation of arts leaders, and deep
100 friendships with artists; and

101 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we pay tribute and
102 express appreciation for the energy of a Mississippi patron and
103 benefactor whose support of the arts has made Mississippi a better
104 place and exemplifies the charitable and artistic/literary
105 traditions of our great state:

106 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
107 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby extend the recognition of the
108 Mississippi Senate to the legacy and community service of Jane
109 Crater Hiatt of Jackson, Mississippi, as the recipient of the 2025
110 Governor's "Stephen C. Edds" Patron of the Arts Award and extend
111 our congratulations to this outstanding arts support leader on
112 this auspicious occasion.

113 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
114 Jane Crater Hiatt and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

