

By: Senator(s) Michel, Barrett, Hopson,
McCaughn, Sparks, Thompson

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 49

1 A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE SINCEREST SYMPATHY OF THE
2 MISSISSIPPI SENATE TO THE SURVIVING FAMILY OF HINDS COUNTY SENIOR
3 CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE HONORABLE WILLIAM SWAN YERGER AND COMMENDING
4 HIS ENORMOUS CIVIC ENERGY ON BEHALF OF HIS COMMUNITY.

5 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of
6 longtime Senior Circuit Court Judge and community benefactor
7 William Swan Yerger of Jackson, Mississippi, who had retired to
8 Mobile, Alabama; and

9 WHEREAS, Honorable William Swan Yerger passed away in Mobile,
10 Alabama, on August 1, 2024. He was born on June 11, 1932, in
11 Jackson, Mississippi, the son of the late Rivers Applewhite Yerger
12 and Wirt Adams Yerger. Mr. Yerger was also a fifth-generation
13 Mississippian graduating locally from Central High School in 1950;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, he became an Eagle Scout at the age of 15 and upon
16 graduation from Central High, he entered the "Rat Class"
17 (freshman) at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia.
18 During his sophomore year, he was elected Class Historian, the



19 third-highest class position. He was on the Honors list and
20 served as Squad Leader; and

21 WHEREAS, transferring to Ole Miss for his junior year, he
22 joined the Air Force ROTC. The following year he was elected
23 Cadet Colonel and Wing Commander for the ROTC. Swan graduated in
24 1954 with a major in History and a minor in English. His senior
25 year also served as his first year of law school; and

26 WHEREAS, upon graduation from Ole Miss, Swan served as Second
27 Lieutenant in the United States Air Force and was stationed with
28 the Air Materiel Command at Brookley Field in Mobile, Alabama. He
29 was later promoted to First Lieutenant; and

30 WHEREAS, following his Air Force service, he entered his
31 second year of law school at the University of Virginia in
32 Charlottesville, Virginia. While there, he was selected as a
33 member of the Student Legal Forum; and

34 WHEREAS, in addition to his law practice, Swan became very
35 involved in the Jackson community. He was President of the
36 Jackson Junior Chamber of Commerce and served as Chairman of the
37 Board of the Metropolitan Jackson YMCA; and

38 WHEREAS, he was also the originator and first chairman of the
39 Mississippi Arts Festival, as well as, serving as its first
40 president. In addition, he was one of the earliest members of the
41 Board of Directors of the Mississippi Institute of Arts and
42 Letters, and later served as its president. Subsequently, he
43 served as an emeritus board member. He was a founding member of



the North Jackson Rotary Club and became its first president.
Swan was also a Paul Harris Fellow and recognized as a Benefactor
of the Rotary Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Swan was dedicated and committed to the legal
profession in addition to his litigation practice. As a
practicing attorney, he held an "A" rating from Martindale
Hubbard. In 1982, he became a fellow of the American Association
of Trial Lawyers. He was President of the Mississippi Chapter of
the Federal Bar Association and the Mississippi Defense Lawyers
Association; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, Swan was appointed by Mississippi Governor
Kirk Fordice to serve as a Hinds County Circuit Court Judge to
complete a two-year term remaining of a retiring judge.
Thereafter, he was elected to three additional four-year terms.
Judge Yerger became a Senior Judge on the Hinds County Circuit
Court in 2002 and served until his retirement at the end of 2010;
and

WHEREAS, during his 14 years on the bench, he presided over
numerous civil and criminal trials. Judge Yerger was also awarded
the Diploma of Judicial Skills by the American College of Judicial
Skills; and

WHEREAS, however, it was his roles as husband, father, and
grandfather that Swan shone even brighter. He was a pillar of
strength and a constant source of love and support for his family;
and



69 WHEREAS, Swan is survived by his wife, Gingia Yerger;
70 daughters, Virginia Yerger Avisto and Rivers (Todd) Yerger
71 Puckett; grandchildren: Palmer Avisto, Harrison Avisto, Rivers
72 Puckett, Mary Hastings Puckett, Carolina Puckett and Todd Puckett,
73 Jr.; and

74 WHEREAS, Judge Yerger served as a leader and mentor,
75 consistently emphasizing professional standards of the practice,
76 including ethics, integrity, civility courtesy and adherence to
77 the Golden Rule; and

78 WHEREAS, his life honored both The Mississippi Bar and this
79 great state that he loved and served:

80 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
81 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby extend the sincerest sympathy of
82 the Mississippi Senate to the surviving family of Hinds County
83 Senior Circuit Court Judge Honorable William Swan Yerger and
84 commend his enormous civic energy on behalf of his community.

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
86 Judge Yerger's surviving family, forwarded to The Mississippi Bar
87 and the North Jackson Rotary Club and made available to the
88 Capitol Press Corps.

