

By: Senator(s) Parks, Sparks

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 53

1 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CENTENNIAL (100TH) ANNIVERSARY
2 CELEBRATION OF THE COLISEUM THEATRE IN CORINTH, MISSISSIPPI.

3 WHEREAS, we join the citizens of Corinth, Mississippi, in
4 celebrating the Centennial (100th) Anniversary of the
5 establishment of the Coliseum Theatre, which is a historic theater
6 in Corinth, Mississippi, and is a Mississippi Landmark designed by
7 Benjamin F. Liddon; and

8 WHEREAS, constructed in 1924, the Coliseum Theatre stands as
9 the largest theater edifice in North Mississippi. Originally
10 established as a dual-purpose venue for vaudeville performances
11 and motion pictures, it transitioned exclusively to a cinema
12 during the mid-1970s. Subsequently, the City of Corinth undertook
13 a restoration project to return the Coliseum to its initial
14 grandeur; and

15 WHEREAS, with an intricately adorned interior featuring
16 plaster molding, wall motifs, and accented marble wainscoting, the
17 auditorium also boasts a sizable stained glass fixture that casts
18 a warm, incandescent glow. Exhibiting Colonial Revival



19 architecture, the exterior showcases a meticulously restored
20 marquee and a vertical sign. In 1980, the Coliseum Theatre was
21 recognized for its historical significance, and rightfully earned
22 a spot on the National Register of Historic Places; and

23 WHEREAS, the Coliseum Theatre has been and remains today the
24 most impressive and monumental theatre space in Corinth,
25 Mississippi. Seating 1,000 people on its main floor, mezzanine,
26 and two-tiered balcony, the Coliseum is discreetly cosmopolitan in
27 structure in a small-town grid. Strikingly, the asymmetrically
28 front facade is accented by a two-story, three-centered entry arch
29 and two smaller arched entries, one three-centered and the other
30 semi-circular. The two frontal bays are defined by quion
31 pilasters with entry being through the smaller right-hand bay.
32 The floor pattern is an ell-shaped plan as the theater occupies
33 approximately one-third of a city block. The building varies in
34 height through eleven irregular spaced bays defined by plain brick
35 pilasters. Constructed of brick in a Flemish bond, two shades of
36 masonry are used to show separation between the entry pavilion and
37 the auditorium, the former being of blonde brick and the latter
38 being a darker brick. Windows on the second story of the front
39 facade are of an undistinguished casement variety painted to match
40 the brick. Overall, the Coliseum makes a generous urban gesture.
41 The theatre respects the existing buildings while quietly
42 declaring its own special nature; and



43 WHEREAS, the building is certainly worthy of recognition and
44 preservation for historical reasons, as well as, for present day
45 needs for the cultural, economic and educational development in
46 the area. It also serves as a focal point for the current
47 downtown revitalization program. There is not an auditorium of
48 this quality in a 50-mile radius that will seat 999 people. Local
49 concert, school, dance, civic, religious and theatre organizations
50 use the facilities for their programs. Plans for adaptive use of
51 the Coliseum Theatre, in addition to the original purposes, are to
52 use it as an auditorium for lectures and special educational films
53 for Corinth and Alcorn County Schools, small convention programs,
54 Northeast Mississippi Museum lectures and Corinth Ministerial
55 Association Community church services; and

56 WHEREAS, the Coliseum Theatre was designed and built by local
57 architect, Benjamin Franklin Liddon, the grandson of a Corinth
58 area pioneer, was a leader in cultural, educational and
59 recreational development in Northeast Mississippi. He designed
60 and constructed several notable buildings in Corinth during the
61 early part of this century. Many traveling shows played the
62 Coliseum in old vaudeville days. Several famous people played
63 there, including the Dick Van Dyke show and later, Grand Ole Opry
64 stars Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, and cowboy comic Smiley
65 Burnett performed there. In silent screen days, the theatre was
66 equipped with a theatre organ in the full orchestra pit. The
67 theatre remained in possession of Mr. Liddon's family after his



68 death and was successfully operated as a movie theatre until 1957.
69 Then, his grandson, Alan Simmons, continued to run weekend and
70 special films until the theatre's closing in 1977; and

71 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we honor the rich
72 cultural heritage of our state and the historical significance of
73 this North Mississippi architectural icon:

74 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
75 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby recognize the Centennial (100th)
76 Anniversary celebration of the Corinth Coliseum Theatre in
77 Corinth, Mississippi, and extend our congratulations to the
78 citizens of Northeast Mississippi on this landmark event.

79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to
80 the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of Corinth, the Alcorn County
81 Tourism Committee and representatives of the Coliseum Theatre
82 Centennial Celebration and the Board of Trustees of the Department
83 of Archives and History and made available to the Capitol Press
84 Corps.

