

By: Senator(s) Horhn, Tate, Frazier,  
Hickman, McCaughn, Norwood, Simmons (12th),  
Simmons (13th), Thomas

To: Rules

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 118

1 A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE CONDOLENCES OF THE MISSISSIPPI  
2 SENATE TO THE SURVIVING FAMILY OF LEGENDARY MERIDIAN TELEVISION  
3 NEWS BROADCASTER JOHN WESLEY JOHNSON AND COMMENDING HIS CAREER OF  
4 PUBLIC SERVICE.

5 WHEREAS, we join local and state leaders and the citizens of  
6 central Mississippi and Alabama in mourning the passing of  
7 legendary former WTOK News Director John Wesley Johnson. Mr.  
8 Johnson was a Meridian, Mississippi, legend who worked at WTOK for  
9 over 32 years. His last day at the station was December 30, 2016;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, a member of the Class of 1968 at Rust College, John  
12 Wesley Johnson was a news director at WTOK-TV since 1985; and

13 WHEREAS, he earned a degree in social science from Rust  
14 College, where he was initiated as a member of Omega Psi Phi  
15 Fraternity, Inc. He then attended graduate school at the  
16 University of Iowa, earning a master of fine arts degree in  
17 theater; and

18 WHEREAS, prior to getting into broadcasting, Johnson taught  
19 for nine years at Rust College. He taught speech communications,



the humanities and stagecraft. He also directed plays for the Rust College Theater Guild; and

WHEREAS, Johnson served on several national, state and local boards during his career. He was president of the Board of Trustees at Meridian Community College in 2010-11. He was also a member of the Community Foundation of East Mississippi and West Alabama. In 2006, he was inducted into the Mississippi Associated Press Broadcasters Hall of Fame, the direct result of his work in leading WTOK-TV's top-rated news department; and

WHEREAS, for thirty-two years, John Johnson came into our living rooms every single night. He was the face of Newscenter 11, where he was and will always be one of the city's most recognizable faces. Local and state leaders proclaimed December 15th as John Johnson Day in 2016 when the mayor of Meridian gave Johnson the key to the city; and

WHEREAS, John Johnson's influence stretched far beyond the people who saw him every night on television, and it went far beyond the borders of Mississippi and Alabama. John gave countless people their first opportunity in the television news business, and many of them have gone on to much larger cities to continue their careers; and

WHEREAS, John stepped away from the anchor desk in 2011, but continued to lead the news department as news director with integrity, a trait for which he was best known. It was not about getting the story first with John; it was always about serving the



45 people he led and serving the community. He leaves the loves of  
46 his life, his wife Pranati, and daughters Joya and Anjali; and

47 WHEREAS, we pay tribute and cherish fondly the memory of this  
48 most public-spirited citizen of Mississippi whose enormous civic  
49 energy will be missed:

50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
51 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby extend the condolences of the  
52 Mississippi Senate to the surviving family of legendary Meridian  
53 television news broadcaster John Wesley Johnson and commend his  
54 career of public service.

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
56 the surviving family of John Wesley Johnson, forwarded to the  
57 Board of Directors of WTOK-TV and be made available to the Capitol  
58 Press Corps.

