By: Senator(s) Dawkins, Gollott, Cuevas, Lee (47th), Hewes

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 531

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE OF JOHN C. BONNER OF GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI, LONGTIME VOICE OF THE HARRISON CENTRAL "RED REBELS" FOOTBALL TEAM AND WORLD WAR II VETERAN, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, John C. Bonner, longtime voice of the Harrison Central "Red Rebels" football team and World War II Veteran, died on Thursday, January 8, 2004; and

WHEREAS, he was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and had been a resident of Gulfport since 1979. He served on the U.S.S. Iowa during the surrender in Tokyo Harbor, Japan, and then retired as a Master Gunnery Sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps having served in Korea and Vietnam. He served in the City of Jackson CETA Program as a department head, then worked as a planner for federal programs at Gulf Coast Business Services, he also sang bass in the St. Joseph Catholic Church Choir; and

WHEREAS, he was also the voice of Red Rebels football team for 20 years. Most fans remember Mr. Bonner as the public address announcer who would always come up with wild attendance figures at Harrison Central football games. There could be 3,000 fans at the game, then he would announce the official attendance as 47,213; and

WHEREAS, for the last 20 years, Mr. Bonner was one of those people who made Red Rebel football games special. The toughest game he ever called was when Harrison Central was playing Clinton in the first round of the state playoffs at Earl Phillips, Sr. Memorial Stadium in 1991, and the fog was so thick that it was nearly impossible to see the visitor's bench from the Red Rebel side. Bonner later talked about how much the fog obscured the

field from the height of the press box and how difficult it made his job; that was the only time in school history that Harrison Central won a state playoff game; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bonner was a football official himself and called games in Japan and the Far East. He did that during his military career which spanned World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He could regale you with stories about those military football games that were played in the mud in the Far East and anyone who has walked into the head coach's office at Harrison Central will see a photograph of Mr. Bonner when he was injured officiating a football game; and

WHEREAS, of this we can be sure, John Bonner will not be forgotten by all those fans who have heard his voice; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife, Ellen C. Bonner; a daughter, Linda Bonner of Jackson; three sons: Mike Bonner and his wife; Steve Bonner and his wife; and Kevin Bonner and his wife; six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Harrison County and the State of Mississippi has lost a wonderful public servant and great American:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend the life of John C. Bonner of Gulfport, Mississippi, longtime voice of the Harrison Central High School "Red Rebels" football team and World War II Veteran, and express to his surviving family the sympathy of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Mr. Bonner's wife, Ellen, and be made available to *The Sun Herald* and members of the Capitol Press Corps.