

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

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 531

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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