MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2004

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Horhn, Walls, Thomas, Harden, Simmons, Gollott, Hyde-Smith, Browning, Jackson (11th), Frazier, Dearing, Bryan, Walley, Clarke, Jackson (32nd), Butler, Chamberlin, King, White, Wilemon, Jackson (15th), Kirby, Michel, Morgan, Lee (35th), Carmichael, Pickering, Chaney, Little, Williamson, Ross, Nunnelee

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 601

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE CAREER AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF AWARD-WINNING ACTRESS DR. TOMMIE H. (TONEA) STEWART OF GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI, AND WELCOMING HER TO MISSISSIPPI.

WHEREAS, "A Time to Kill" Actress and Director of Drama at Alabama State University (ASU), Dr. Tommie H. (Tonea) Stewart, gives motivational presentations to students through the eyes of her grandfather, a former slave, encouraging them to make a difference in the world through their God-given talent; and

WHEREAS, "Tonea" Stewart, a native of Greenwood, Mississippi, has lived in Montgomery, Alabama, since 1990. She is a tenured Professor and the Director of Theatre Arts at Alabama State University. Also, she is a professional actress; and

WHEREAS, as Director of Theatre, Tonea serves as a teacher, role model and mentor to many students at ASU. Since her arrival, the number of Theatre majors and minors, and the number of graduates from the program has soared. Youth from the Montgomery area and across the nation have been touched by Tonea's artistry through T.A.P.S. (Theatre Artists Performance School) and Camp 3T (Teaching Through Theatre), summer performance and enrichment camps; and

WHEREAS, after receiving a B.S. degree in Speech and Theatre from Jackson State University and an M.A. in Theatre Arts from the University of California at Santa Barbara, Tonea completed her Ph.D. in Theatre Arts at Florida State University (FSU) in 1989. She was the first African-American female to receive a doctorate from the FSU School of Theatre and the first McKnight Doctoral Fellow in Theatre Arts. During her study at FSU, Tonea also

received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities; and

WHEREAS, as an actress, Tonea is perhaps best known for her recurring role in "In the Heat of the Night." More recently, she co-produced an independent feature film, "Roper and Goodie," and was Associate Producer of the CBS movie, "The Rosa Parks Story." She has earned an NAACP Image Award nomination for her role in the film adaptation of John Grisham's "A Time to Kill" and The Gold Medal Award for the narration of Public Radio International Series "Remembering Slavery," and is the 1999 Rabriel Award Winner. Tonea began her acting career in 1969 and became the first African-American to direct and star at New Stage Theatre, the most prestigious equity theatre in Mississippi. Since then, she has performed on stage in Canada, Mexico, South Korea and throughout the United States, including Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, and has appeared on screen and television. Some notable titles include: "Mississippi Burning," "Invasion of the Body Snatchers III," "Living Large, My Stepson/My Lover," "Walker Texas Ranger," "Matlock," "Leave of Absence," "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," "ER" and "Touched by an Angel"; and

WHEREAS, Tonea is a spokesperson for "One Church, One Child" of Alabama and for Alabama Adult Foster Care. In 1995, she was inducted into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame. She has honorary doctorates from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa and Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas, and has received numerous keys to cities throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, Tonea is a member of the Order of The Golden Circle, a life member of the NAACP, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and a dedicated member of Hutchinson Baptist Church. She is married to Dr. Allen Stewart. They have three children; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the contributions of this well-known spokesperson who has meant so

much and brought honor to her hometown of Greenwood and to the State of Mississippi:

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 career and public service of award-winning actress Dr. Tommie H. (Tonea) Stewart of Greenwood, Mississippi, and welcome her and her family to Mississippi and extend to them the best wishes of the Legislature on future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Dr. Tonea Stewart and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.