

By: Senator(s) Walls, Jackson
(11th), Jordan, Thomas, Butler,
Jackson (32nd), Harden, Simmons,
Williamson

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 515

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED
2 PUBLIC SERVICE OF HONORABLE WALTER WRIGHT THOMPSON, SR., OF
3 CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE
4 LEGISLATURE.

5 WHEREAS, Honorable Walter Thompson, Sr., 58, an attorney and
6 friend to the most powerful Democrats in the country, died
7 September 29, 2004, in Memphis, Tennessee. Funeral services were
8 held October 1, 2004, at St. George's Episcopal Church in
9 Clarksdale, Mississippi; and

10 WHEREAS, he was born in Bentonia and grew up in Southern
11 Mississippi. His father was a farmer and he and his brothers all
12 lived in the same room. The urge to be thrifty was one he carried
13 with him all his life, said his eldest son, Walter Wright
14 Thompson, Jr., a Journalist who lives in Kansas City, Missouri;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Thompson's desire was to become a lawyer, so he
17 attended both undergraduate and graduate school at the University
18 of Mississippi. He first started practicing law in the 1970s, and
19 his first firm was then Lt. Gov. Charlie Sullivan of Clarksdale.
20 Law and politics were always high on his list; and

21 WHEREAS, "Practicing law was truly one of his passions,"
22 Wright said. "He literally had clients from Bill Clinton to some
23 who paid his fee with tomatoes. His real passion for the past
24 decade had been with lawsuits involving nursing homes. It was
25 more than a job, he was generally upset about the way the elderly
26 were treated." Politics and his church, St. George's Episcopal,
27 were also huge parts of Thompson's life; and

28 WHEREAS, when he was in high school, he was a Page for
29 Senator John Stennis, and he was actually on the Senate floor when
30 Medicare became law. He was among one of the first group of
31 people on an exploratory committee for Bill Clinton's campaign.
32 He was a life-long member of the Democratic Party, and a national
33 fundraiser for people like John Glenn, Al Gore and Bill Clinton;
34 and

35 WHEREAS, Walter was good friends with a lot of civil rights
36 leaders and he was very passionate about equal opportunity; and

37 WHEREAS, among the survivors is Thompson's wife of 34 years,
38 Mary McKenzie, a native of Shelby. Other survivors include a son,
39 William McKenzie Thompson; and brothers, Frazier R. Thompson of
40 Memphis, William P. Thompson of Yazoo City and Michael H. Thompson
41 of Memphis; and

42 WHEREAS, Thompson served as the Chairman of the Coahoma
43 County Democratic Committee for 21 years. Thompson served on the
44 Democratic Committee until his death, and those who worked with
45 him spoke fondly of him; and

46 WHEREAS, a retired Captain with the Judge Advocate General
47 (JAG) Corps in the United States Army Reserve, was born on April
48 14, 1946. He graduated from the University of Mississippi in
49 1968, and the University of Mississippi Law School in 1971; and

50 WHEREAS, Thompson was a former President of the Coahoma
51 County Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Board of Governors
52 of the Mississippi Trial Lawyers Association. Thompson also
53 served on the Mississippi Democratic Executive Committee and the
54 Board of Directors for the Democratic National Executive
55 Committee. He was the Mississippi State Finance Chairman for
56 Senator John Glenn, Governor Michael Dukakis, Governor Bill
57 Clinton and Senator Al Gore and the Mississippi Finance Chairman
58 for the Clinton-Gore Presidential Campaign. In 2004, he was
59 awarded the Stanford Young Award for the Most Outstanding
60 Democratic Attorney in Mississippi. He was also a member of

61 Omicron Delta Kappa, Scabbard and Blade and Phi Delta Theta. He
62 was a member of the Lamar Order, University of Mississippi Law
63 Center, and served on the vestry of St. George's Episcopal Church;
64 and

65 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this
66 respected Mississippi lawyer, whose influence extended to our
67 nation's capital:

68 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
69 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
70 we do hereby commend the life and dedicated public service of
71 Honorable Walter Wright Thompson, Sr., of Clarksdale, Mississippi,
72 and express to his family the sympathy of the Legislature on his
73 passing.

74 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
75 the surviving family of Walter Thompson, Sr., and be made
76 available to the Capitol Press Corps.