

By: Representatives Perkins, Flaggs,
Blackmon, Cockerham, Coleman (29th), Evans,
Fredericks, Huddleston, Malone, Myers, Scott,
Whittington, Fleming

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 38

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MS. WILLYE B.
2 WHITE, THE FIRST AMERICAN AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN FEMALE TO APPEAR IN
3 FIVE OLYMPICS AND EXPRESS OUR SYMPATHY UPON HER PASSING.

4 WHEREAS, the world lost an athletic icon when Willye B.
5 White, the first American and first African-American female to
6 appear in five Olympics, passed this life at age 67; and

7 WHEREAS, in 1981, the State of Mississippi recognized the
8 athletic contributions made by Ms. White by inducting her into the
9 Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame; and

10 WHEREAS, although she passed as a Chicago resident, she was a
11 daughter of the Mississippi Delta, because she was born in the
12 tiny Mississippi Delta town of Money and raised in the Greenwood
13 area; and

14 WHEREAS, she was an exceptional athlete and enthusiastically
15 exhibited her athletic prowess during a time when it wasn't all
16 that socially acceptable for girls to excel in sports; and

17 WHEREAS, in spite of the times, she broke loose from the
18 poverty of the Delta and attended Tennessee State University from
19 1959-1962 and achieved national acclaim with the same Tigerbelle
20 team that produced Wilma Rudolph; and

21 WHEREAS, she was often called Tom Sawyer because she ran
22 barefoot just as well as she did in shoes; and

23 WHEREAS, as history tells us, she abandoned running barefoot
24 to become a polished, amazing athlete; and

25 WHEREAS, as evidence of her polished talent, she appeared in
26 every Olympics between 1956 and 1972, winning two silver medals,

27 one in the long jump in 1956 and the other in the 4x100 meter
28 relay in 1964; and

29 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to
30 recognize and commend native Mississippi athletes who have
31 contributed to history by gaining national acclaim in their sport:

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
33 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we commend the
34 life and legacy of Ms. Willye B. White, the first American and
35 first African-American female to appear in five Olympics and
36 express our sympathy upon her passing.

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
38 furnished to the family of Ms. Willye B. White and members of the
39 Capitol Press Corps.