

By: The Entire Membership

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 59

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMEMORATING
2 THE LIFE, LEGACY AND DISTINGUISHED FOOTBALL CAREER OF MR. WILLIE
3 L. RICHARDSON, JR., AND EXPRESSING DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO HIS FAMILY
4 AND FRIENDS UPON HIS PASSING.

5 WHEREAS, "To everything there is a season, and a time to
6 every purpose under the Heaven," and as such, God, in his divine
7 providence in the orchestration of our lives' destiny of faith,
8 love and service as the grand architect of the universe, the
9 immaculate author and finisher of our soul's destiny, has brought
10 to a close the life of beloved friend and Jackson State football's
11 legendary icon, Mr. Willie L. Richardson, Jr., as his mortal
12 presence has been summoned to Heaven's court of eternal rest, upon
13 making life's final transition from earthly travailing to heavenly
14 reward, rendering great sorrow and loss to his family and friends;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Mississippi, particularly the Jackson State
17 University football fans and alumni association, and the citizens
18 of the City of Jackson, lost a wonderful friend, avid sportsman,



19 former NFL Pro and College Football Hall of Famer on Monday,
20 February 8, 2016, with the untimely demise of Mr. Richardson; and

21 WHEREAS, a native of Clarksdale, who was raised in
22 Greenville, Mr. Richardson's formal education culminated with the
23 receipt of his high school diploma from Coleman High School,
24 before advancing his postsecondary matriculation at Jackson State
25 University where he established himself as a force of reckoning on
26 the football field and was a pioneering trailblazer that drew the
27 eye of national attention to the university's football program and
28 exceptional caliber of players that would flow from its channels
29 after he was selected in the 7th round of the NFL Draft in 1963 by
30 the Baltimore Colts; and

31 WHEREAS, a sure-footed, quick-handed, versatile athlete,
32 Willie played nine seasons of professional football as a wide
33 receiver, eight of which were spent with his drafting team, the
34 Colts, which was interrupted by a one-year stint with the Miami
35 Dolphins during the 1970 season, before returning to his beloved
36 Colts in 1971, a career that culminated with a super bowl
37 appearance in Super Bowl III, when the Colts matched up against
38 the New York Jets, in addition to being named First Team All-Pro
39 in 1967, and Pro Bowl selections in 1967 and 1968; and

40 WHEREAS, a three-time hall of famer, Mr. Richardson's skill,
41 sheer athleticism and command of the game allowed him to amass a
42 record of statistics that would place him in a rivalry of
43 Mississippi's native sons as the three all-time top receivers to



44 go pro, along with Lance Alworth and Jerry Rice, and allowed him
45 to be inducted into the Jackson State University Sports Hall of
46 Fame, Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and the College Football
47 Hall of Fame in the years 1978, 1979 and 2003 respectively; and

48 WHEREAS, after completing his league career, Mr. Richardson
49 coached at Morgan State University for three years before making
50 the ultimate decision to return home to Mississippi in 1979, upon
51 the inquiry made of him by A.C. Butch Lambert during his
52 Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame induction; and

53 WHEREAS, immediately upon his return, Willie went to work as
54 a public sector employee, serving as Director of Enforcement in
55 the Weight Division of the Mississippi State Tax Commission and
56 reconnecting with his undergraduate alma mater through using his
57 career in the NFL as a platform for recruiting prospective student
58 athletes, and served as the colorful analyst for the Tigers'
59 football games and host of the weekly hour-long show on ESPN, The
60 Zone 105.9 FM; and

61 WHEREAS, as fate would lend itself to the building upon the
62 blueprint divinely designed for the pattern of his life by the
63 God-head of the Great Deity, Mr. Richardson's chivalry and
64 affection pierced the heart of Earline O. Richardson, and the duo
65 became bone of one another's bone and flesh of one another's flesh
66 after exchanging the nuptials of holy matrimony more than 50 years
67 ago, and completed their family unit with the fruitful addition of
68 three children; and



69 WHEREAS, in Mr. Richardson's transfiguration from mortality
70 to immortality, he now awaits in holy anticipation the wondrous
71 event of the bridegroom's return, as it is written in the Book
72 of Revelation 21:1-2 -- "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:
73 for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and
74 there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new
75 Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a
76 bride adorned for her husband."; and

77 WHEREAS, though he has traversed the river of life to now
78 stand upon the celestial shores of Heaven's grandeur, the legacy
79 of Mr. Richardson will continue to refresh the hearts and fond
80 memories of his beloved survivors: doting and caring wife,
81 Earline O. Richardson; son, Willie L. Richardson III; daughters,
82 Sonja Boyce and Shawn E. Terry; three brothers; one sister; six
83 grandchildren; and a host of other relatives, colleagues and
84 friends; and

85 WHEREAS, Mr. Richardson was a solemn voice of reason and
86 beacon of inspirational hope, encompassed in the selfless
87 humanitarianism of an individual of esteemed caliber who
88 epitomized the highest standard of leadership, deference and
89 fairness; and

90 WHEREAS, we encourage the family to find solace from the
91 overwhelming sadness created by the earthly departure of their
92 beloved family member in Revelation 21:4, wherein is recorded,
93 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there



94 shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither
95 shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed
96 away" and renewed in their faith that Mr. Richardson fulfilled
97 the commandment of II Timothy 4:7 by having fought a good fight,
98 finishing his course and keeping the faith until the hour of his
99 departure was at hand; and

100 WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to commend the
101 outstanding life and legacy of such an exceptional athlete and son
102 of Mississippi who has left a lasting impression upon the hearts
103 of his family, friends and community:

104 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
105 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
106 THEREIN, That we do hereby mourn the loss and commemorate the
107 life, legacy and distinguished career of Mr. Willie L. Richardson,
108 Jr., to whose family we express sincere and deepest sympathy upon
109 the occasion of his passing.

110 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
111 furnished to the family of Mr. Willie L. Richardson, Jr., and to
112 the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

