

By: Representatives Calvert, Smith, Horne,  
Young

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 105

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE, LEGACY AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF  
2 MRS. CHERYL "CHERI" MERRITT BARRY EXPRESSING SINCEREST SYMPATHY  
3 UPON HER PASSING.

4 WHEREAS, Mrs. Cheryl "Cheri" Merritt Barry, the loving and  
5 vibrant jewel of the Barry Family as well as a political pioneer,  
6 as she was the City of Meridian's first and only female mayor,  
7 departed this earthly life, at the age of 68, on Christmas Eve,  
8 December 24, 2023, to be in the presence of the Lord, surrounded  
9 in love by her family and friends; and

10 WHEREAS, Mrs. Barry, who was affectionally referred to as  
11 "YaYa" by many - which is a doting name that was given to her by  
12 her grandchildren - was born on April 19, 1955, to her parents,  
13 George and Jean Merritt, and was reared in love, along with her  
14 older brother, Greg, and younger sister, Jeanna; and

15 WHEREAS, knowing the importance of earning an education, Mrs.  
16 Barry graduated from Lamar High School, where she was an  
17 outstanding member of the softball team, where her innate nature



18 of teamwork later used in her life during her service to others,  
19 shone through as she was known for her fierce pitching skills; and

20 WHEREAS, after high school, Mrs. Barry began her college  
21 career at Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, before  
22 attending the University of Mississippi, where she met the love of  
23 her life, Rick, whom she would go on to unite in holy matrimony on  
24 August 6, 1977; and

25 WHEREAS, aptly described as one who never met a stranger,  
26 Mrs. Barry, who had always immersed herself in helping the  
27 Meridian community, even as a youth, also had a huge place in her  
28 heart for those with special needs, and she made it one of her  
29 missions to always make them feel included, which is a wonderful  
30 testament of her kind and beautiful soul; and

31 WHEREAS, Mrs. Barry's professional career was mainly in  
32 public service, where she worked with the Lafayette and Lauderdale  
33 County welfare systems and focused on children and geriatric abuse  
34 victims; and

35 WHEREAS, blessed with a "get it done" attitude, when it came  
36 to serving others, Mrs. Barry selflessly served with her local Red  
37 Cross chapter and helped during Hurricane Katrina by facilitating  
38 restoration of the counties served by the American Red Cross Key  
39 Chapter, and she served as the Executive Director of Key Chapter  
40 during the 9/11 tragedy; and

41 WHEREAS, Mrs. Barry later served as the Executive Director of  
42 the Rush Foundation and helped raise money to distribute to the



43 families of hospital employees and vendors in time of need, and  
44 she even revamped the Rush Gift Shop by generously using her  
45 expertise in retail, which she gained from her parents as they  
46 were the owners of several businesses, most notably, Bonnie Jeans  
47 and BJ's Alley, which she later owned and managed; and

48 WHEREAS, after making significant contributions with the Red  
49 Cross and the Rush Foundation, Mrs. Barry made the ultimate  
50 contribution by serving as the mayor of the City of Meridian from  
51 2009 through 2013, where she led the charge in making several  
52 improvements in the Queen City; and

53 WHEREAS, Mrs. Barry, while serving as mayor, made various  
54 accomplishments during her administration, some of which are as  
55 follows: completion of the renovations of the city hall;  
56 improvements of the 22nd Avenue overpass; constructed two city  
57 fire stations; relocated the police department and the city  
58 partnered with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians in which  
59 they had several collaborations, one of which is the current city  
60 hall lawn Christmas tree; and

61 WHEREAS, due to her outstanding community service, Mrs. Barry  
62 received various awards such as being named Junior Auxiliary  
63 Humanitarian of the Year and *The Meridian Star's* Woman of the  
64 Year, and although she loved serving her community, one of her  
65 greatest joys was spending time with her wonderful and adoring  
66 family; and



67           WHEREAS, Mrs. Barry, who was a lifelong believer, found  
68 comfort by remembering her beloved Psalm 46:10 - "Be still, and  
69 know that I am God . . ." and she found comfort by knowing that  
70 God was her refuge and her strength; and

71           WHEREAS, the memories of Mrs. Barry will continue to flourish  
72 in the hearts and minds of her loved ones, some of whom include:  
73 her mother, Jean Carol Rosenbaum Merritt; husband of 46 years,  
74 John Richard "Rick" Barry; children, Jennifer Barry Fowler, Jay  
75 Richard Barry and John Merritt Barry; siblings, Greg Alvin Merritt  
76 and Jean Merritt Bennett; grandchildren, George Bass Fowler, Avery  
77 Fowler, John Hayes Fowler, Georgia Leigh Barry and John Carr Barry  
78 and a host of other loved ones and friends, who will forever  
79 treasure the wonderful and fine example of a life that she lived  
80 as well as the pearls of wisdom she so freely shared throughout  
81 her 68 years of blessed life; and

82           WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to  
83 honor the life of a selfless public servant such as Mrs. Barry  
84 whose service to her community and the City of Meridian will be  
85 treasured for generations to come:

86           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
87 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby  
88 commend the life, legacy and contributions of Mrs. Cheryl "Cheri"  
89 Merritt Barry and extend sincerest sympathy upon her passing to  
90 her family and many friends.



91 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
92 furnished to the family of Mrs. Cheryl "Cheri" Merritt Barry and  
93 to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

