MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representative Newman To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMEMORATING THE ESTEEMED AND LAUDABLE LEGISLATIVE CAREER AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE MOST HONORABLE AND DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN FROM RANKIN, REPRESENTATIVE NOLAN "RAY" R. ROGERS, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE UPON HIS PASSING.

WHEREAS, it is written in II Corinthians 4:17-18, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," and as such, the immaculate author and finisher of our soul's destiny summoned the mortal presence of the honorable and distinguished Gentleman from Rankin, former Representative Nolan "Ray" R. Rogers, who represented House District 61, situated in Rankin County, for 36 consecutive years, as he has made life's final transition from earthly travailing to heavenly reward on Friday, December 18, 2020, rendering great sorrow and loss to his family and friends; and

WHEREAS, the Pearl community, and the entirety of Rankin County lost a wonderful friend, charismatic leader, veterans champion, gifted athlete and sports' legend with the passing of Representative Rogers, born to his late parents, Mr. Ernest Lazarus Rogers and Mrs. Ellen Viola Collins Rogers, on July 3, 1931, and there is now a hush in our hearts as we come together to pay our respects to the memory of one who has been called to join that innumerable heavenly caravan; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong resident of Pearl under the exceptional guidance of his parents, who placed a premium value on religion, education and civic involvement, a young Ray graduated from Pearl High School in 1951, and subsequently embarked on an exciting life as a baseball player, initially playing semi-pro for the Washington Senators (now the Minnesota Twins), and later with the minor league Meridian Millers of the Cotton States League for the 1953 and 1954 seasons, before tapping in the vein of his entrepreneurial spirit and opening Ad-World Advertising Specialists in 1964, as well as serving as a Rankin County Justice of the Peace; and

WHEREAS, poised to achieve greatness as a natural-born leader, which was recognized early in his life, as indicated by his election to Senior Class President, Mr. Pearl High School, Most Versatile and Most Athletic, his records of firsts transcended the school's hallway and made lasting impacts on the playing field as Pearl High School Football Team's first

quarterback and captain, who was also named to the All Conference, All-State and Mississippi High School All-Star teams; and

WHEREAS, before assuming his first term as a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives for District 61 in 1983, Representative Rogers devoted himself to the innovative growth and success of his beloved Pearl, as one of the community leaders who chartered the Pearl Jaycees, formed the Pearl Pirate Booster/Touchdown Club and pushed for the incorporation of the City of Pearl, which gave him credibility as being considered among the city's "Founding Father"; and

WHEREAS, Representative Rogers' love and deeply felt respect for the Legislature as a hallowed institution was innately apparent in his welcoming and authentically pleasant and cordial disposition, which have served as beacons of hope in pursuit to preserve and nurture the integrity of the body for all legislators; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure as a legislator, Representative Rogers served on the following committees: Military Affairs for 20 years, as Chairman; a ranking member and former Vice Chairman of Ways and Means; former Vice Chairman of Municipalities; former Vice Chairman of Public Utilities; Banking and Financial Services; County Affairs; Education for 20 years; Ethics; Investigate State Offices; Management; PEER; Public Property; Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (formerly Game and Fish); and

WHEREAS, not one to limit his community involvement to the Legislature, Representative Rogers remained active in his district and dedicated to improving the quality of life for all citizens, as evidenced by his service as a Mason, Shriner, Kiwanis Club member, member of the Pearl Chamber of Commerce, Rankin First and the Pearl Athletic Alumni Association, and was able to sustain constituency outreach through his physical and vocal presence for 55 years as the "Voice of the Pirates" from 1964 to 2018, in the aptly named "Ray Rogers Press Box," located inside, what would become, the "Ray Rogers Stadium" in 2008; and

WHEREAS, committed in his legislative capacity to bring economic growth and job opportunities to Pearl and Rankin County, Representative Rogers was a member of the executive team of elected officials responsible for bringing Trustmark Park and the Mississippi Braves to Pearl, acquiring Bass Pro Shops and the Outlets of Mississippi, which employ over 1,000 people in Pearl; and

WHEREAS, Representative Rogers' rapport and effectiveness as Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee enabled him to facilitate the construction of a senior citizen's center and the Veterans Affairs/Veterans Home Board building, as well as acquiring $300 million from the federal government and $100 million from the State of Mississippi to build three Veterans Nursing Homes in Oxford, Collins and Kosciusko; and

WHEREAS, while Representative Rogers' life was favored with many opportunities both far and near, those that really knew his heart knew that his first love was his darling wife, Mrs. Shirley Jane Greer Rogers, who, in accordance with the blueprint divinely designed for the pattern of Ray's life by the Great Deity and grand architect of our lives' destiny, won her suitor's heart with her warm disposition, beautiful smile, genteel nature, and with whom he embarked upon a remarkable journey of love that spanned more than 67 years, which was highlighted with sparks of joy with the addition of three daughters; and

WHEREAS, the members of the House of Representatives will cherish the bond and common goals for the betterment of this great state shared with the Honorable Representative Nolan "Ray" R. Rogers over the course of the past 36 years, and that his impeccable service was unparalleled to the Mississippi Legislature and to the constituents of District 61; and

WHEREAS, Representative Rogers led a life of bravery in the face of challenge, sincerity in the face of apathy and honesty in the presence of deceit, and through it all, he remained a phenomenal gentleman, grounded in his integrity, who sought to improve the lives of others through positive example, hard work and the undeniable truths of the Word of God endeared to his heart as a member of McLaurin Heights United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, though he has traversed life's river to now stand upon the celestial shores in wonderment of Heaven's grandeur in

glorious reunion with the kindred spirits who transitioned before him, including his parents and siblings, Mildred Eiland (Pete), James Niermon Rogers (Phyllis), Collis Joseph Rogers, Maggie Elizabeth Morgan (Earl), Lazarus Matthews Rogers and Rosanna Rogers, the legacy of Representative Rogers' indelible imprint upon our lives will continue to refresh the hearts and fond memories of his beloved survivors: devoted wife of 67 years, Shirley Greer Rogers; daughters, Sherry Downs, Pam Rogers and Kim Rogers; four grandchildren, Jordan Downs, John Rogers Downs, Walker Prestel and Jane Ellen Prestel; two great-grandchildren, Kruise Atwood and Mary Kamdyn Atwood; sister, Ernestine Murray; and a host of other relatives, colleagues and friends; and

WHEREAS, it is the policy of this Legislature to honor the laudable legacy of remarkable service of our former colleague and friend, Representative Nolan "Ray" R. Rogers, who represented his district, this body and the people of this state with honor and intrepid dignity, and whose monumental life of genuine selflessness illuminated the path of hope for all he encountered along this earthly sojourn:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby mourn the loss and commemorate the esteemed and laudable legislative career and public service of the most honorable, distinguished Gentleman from Rankin,

Representative Nolan "Ray" R. Rogers, to whose family we express sincere and deepest sympathy upon his passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be furnished to the family of Representative Nolan "Ray" R. Rogers and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.