



HR0609

LRB098 14352 GRL 48988 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to commemorate the 50th anniversary of
4 James Meredith's graduation from the University of
5 Mississippi; and

6 WHEREAS, James Howard Meredith was born on June 25, 1933 in
7 Kosciusko, Mississippi, and was raised on a farm with his 9
8 brothers and sisters; he first experienced institutionalized
9 racism while riding a train from Chicago with his brother; when
10 the train arrived in Memphis, Tennessee, he was ordered to give
11 up his seat and move to the crowded black section of the train,
12 where he had to stand for the rest of his trip home; this event
13 spurred him to dedicate his life to ensuring equal treatment
14 for African-Americans; and

15 WHEREAS, After high school, James Meredith served in the
16 United States Air Force for 9 years before enrolling in Jackson
17 State College, an all-black school, in Mississippi; in 1961, he
18 applied to the all-white University of Mississippi; he was
19 admitted, but his admission was withdrawn when the registrar
20 discovered his race; this action, done in violation of Brown v.
21 Board of Education ruling, which ordered all public educational
22 institutions to desegregate by this time, prompted him to file
23 suit against the university alleging discrimination; although

1 the district court ruled against him, the case made its way to
2 the United States Supreme Court, which ruled in his favor; and

3 WHEREAS, When James Meredith arrived at the University of
4 Mississippi to register for classes on September 20, 1962, he
5 found the entrance blocked; after riots erupted, United States
6 Marshals, military police, troops from the Mississippi
7 National Guard, and officials from the United States Border
8 Patrol were sent to quell the disturbances; on October 1, 1962,
9 he became the first black student to enroll at the University
10 of Mississippi, which has become known as a watershed moment in
11 the civil rights movement; in 1963, he graduated from the
12 University of Mississippi with a degree in political science;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, After graduating from the University of
15 Mississippi, James Meredith earned his Master's Degree in
16 economics from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria and his law
17 degree from Columbia University in 1968; from 1989 to 1991, he
18 served as a domestic adviser to United States Senator Jesse
19 Helms; and

20 WHEREAS, James Meredith was the recipient of the Harvard
21 Graduate School of Education's Medal for Education Impact on
22 May 29, 2013 for his work in promoting school preparedness and
23 building moral character in our nation's youth; therefore, be

1 it

2 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
3 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
4 we commemorate the 50th anniversary of James Meredith's
5 graduation from the University of Mississippi and thank Mr.
6 Meredith for his pioneering work in ensuring the equal
7 treatment of all; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That we congratulate James Meredith on the
9 occasion of his 80th birthday and wish him many happy and
10 healthy years to come; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
12 presented to James Meredith as a symbol of our respect and
13 esteem.