

1 HR56
2 217221-1
3 By Representatives Drummond, Clarke, Jones (S) and Bracy
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 09-FEB-22

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8 CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MS. CLERETTA
9 ARIZANA THOMAS-BLACKMON.

10
11 WHEREAS, it is with profound sorrow that we note the
12 death on February 2, 2022, of Ms. Cleretta Arizana
13 Thomas-Blackmon at the age of 82; and

14 WHEREAS, her passing leaves a void in the lives of
15 her loving family, many friends, and the entire community,
16 where she was highly regarded; and

17 WHEREAS, Ms. Thomas-Blackmon was born on August 9,
18 1939, to Frank P. Thomas and Lancie M. Thomas; and

19 WHEREAS, at a young age, Ms. Thomas-Blackmon watched
20 and learned the ropes of the newspaper industry under the
21 caring tutelage of her parents, the founders of The Mobile
22 Beacon, Alabama's oldest family-owned African American
23 Newspaper; her parents were also instrumental in the
24 desegregation of The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa,
25 where Mr. Thomas, a World War II Veteran, had founded his own
26 newspaper publication, The Alabama Citizen; Ms.

27 Thomas-Blackmon earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Wayne

1 State University in Detroit, Michigan, where she majored in
2 Business Administration and Psychology and minored in
3 Journalism; she then spent many years as a Social Worker for
4 both the Department of Education and Social Security
5 Disability before moving to Mobile, Alabama, to steer her
6 parents' dream by taking the helm of The Mobile Beacon in the
7 1980s; some of her other achievements included being
8 instrumental in service for decades with the National
9 Newspaper Publishers Association (where she also served on its
10 Board of Directors), along with The Black Press of America,
11 The Alabama Press Association (where she also served on its
12 Board of Directors), and the National Newspaper Association;
13 and serving the National Newspaper Publishers Association
14 Bylaws and Archives Committee, The National Council of Negro
15 Women as the Treasurer, the National Association for the
16 Advancement of Colored People as the Secretary, and The
17 Epilepsy Foundation of Alabama as the Chairperson for many
18 terms; and

19 WHEREAS, proud to have Jesus Christ as her Lord and
20 Savior, Ms. Thomas-Blackmon was passionate about her faith;
21 she featured many spiritual articles in The Mobile Beacon,
22 including its signature seasonal messages of inspiration from
23 local pastors in the Mobile area; in addition, Ms.
24 Thomas-Blackmon was a very devoted and active member of her
25 church, Hillsdale Presbyterian Church, for many years, and was
26 also active in the state and national levels of the
27 Presbytery; and

1 WHEREAS, Ms. Thomas-Blackmon loved spending time
2 with her family, friends, and community; traveling; dressing
3 well; playing bridge; listening to good music; and attending
4 galas and functions; and

5 WHEREAS, she was preceded in death by her loving
6 parents, Frank P. Thomas and Lencie M. Thomas, both of whom
7 are in the National Hall of Honors for the National Newspaper
8 Publishers Association and the Alabama Press Association,
9 respectfully; and the father of her children, Arthur Blackmon;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Ms. Thomas-Blackmon is survived by her son,
12 Hjordis Blackmon; daughter, Merina Blackmon; grandson, Justin
13 Bankston; a beloved and dedicated woman who was like a sister
14 to her, Akima Abrakata; niece, Valencia Jackson; devoted
15 friend and co-worker of many years, Irma Love; and a host of
16 other family members and friends; and

17 WHEREAS, although her presence will be greatly
18 missed, the memory of Ms. Thomas-Blackmon will be cherished in
19 the hearts of all who knew and loved her; as a woman who was
20 passionate about lending a hand to those in need and who had a
21 tireless work ethic, her beautiful soul touched the lives of
22 many; now therefore,

23 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
24 THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That the death of Ms. Cleretta
25 Arizana Thomas-Blackmon is recorded with deep sadness, and
26 this resolution is offered in tribute to her life, along with

1 heartfelt sympathy to her family, whose grief is shared by
2 many.