

HR230 INTRODUCED



1 HR230
2 YMCEVN6-1
3 By Representatives Clarke, Drummond, Jones, Bracy
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 10-Mar-26



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

HR _____ MOURNING THE DEATH OF THOMAS MICHELE WITHERS.

WHEREAS, it is with deep sorrow and regret that we note the lamentable death of Thomas Michele Withers of Mobile, Alabama, on February 26, 2026, at the age of 91 years; known affectionately by most as "Tom," he was a familiar and respected presence in the Mobile community throughout his lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Withers was born on January 25, 1935, in Mobile to the late James and Valena Withers, and was raised in the historic Down the Bay neighborhood on the city's south side; and

WHEREAS, a proud graduate of Central High School in 1952, Mr. Withers continued his education at Tuskegee Institute, now Tuskegee University, earning his degree in 1956; he later began his professional journey as an educator, sharing his knowledge and encouragement with students at Mobile County Training School and Mary G. Montgomery High School; and

WHEREAS, demonstrating determination during a time of social barriers, Mr. Withers made history by becoming the first African-American automobile salesman in Mobile; through his notable work at Robinson Brothers Lincoln-Mercury, he earned widespread respect across the Gulf Coast as one of the region's most accomplished



HR230 INTRODUCED

29 automobile sales professionals; and

30 WHEREAS, even after retirement, his commitment to
31 engaging with people and serving the public never waned, as
32 he continued greeting visitors arriving on Carnival cruise
33 ships at the Port of Mobile, sharing his warmth and
34 hospitality with travelers until the age of 90; and

35 WHEREAS, Mr. Withers was deeply involved in the civic
36 and cultural life of Mobile, particularly through his
37 enthusiastic support of Mardi Gras traditions and his
38 participation in numerous organizations, including the
39 Mobile Area Mardi Gras Association, Omega Psi Phi
40 Fraternity, Incorporated, the Original Dragons Social Club,
41 the Bay Area Riding Club, and the Board of Directors of the
42 Mobile Sports Hall of Fame; and

43 WHEREAS, a man of enduring faith, he was a lifelong
44 member of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, where
45 he generously shared his time, fellowship, and talents with
46 his church family; and

47 WHEREAS, remembered for his vibrant personality,
48 dedication to community, and his joyful rallying phrase,
49 "It's what? Showtime!", Mr. Withers lived a life that
50 celebrated connection, culture, and service, and his
51 presence will be deeply missed by all who knew him; and

52 WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents;
53 beloved eldest sister, Alice Ethel Dixon; brothers, James
54 Withers and Charles Withers; best buddy, Anthony Gayles; and
55 dearest friend, Baseball Legend, Henry "Hammerin' Hank"
56 Aaron; and



HR230 INTRODUCED

57 WHEREAS, left to cherish his loving memory are his
58 beloved wife, Vivian Stewart Withers; daughter, Rita Michele
59 Withers Smith; twin granddaughters, Taylor Michelle Smith
60 and Gabrielle Dominique Smith; sister, Valena W. McCants;
61 sisters-in-law, Erma Withers and Doris Newton; cherished
62 brother-in-law, Herbert L. Stewart (Lena); and a host of
63 nieces, nephews, godchildren, and countless friends whom he
64 embraced as family; and

65 WHEREAS, Mr. Withers was a valuable member of the
66 community who loved his family and who formed many special
67 friendships among his neighbors and associates through the
68 years; he will be sorrowfully missed, but his influence
69 remains, and his memory will be forever treasured in the
70 hearts of those whose lives he shared; now therefore,

71 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
72 LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That the death of Thomas Michele
73 "Tom" Withers is recorded with deep sadness, and even as we
74 mourn his death, we also celebrate his life; this resolution
75 is offered in highest tribute, along with heartfelt sympathy
76 to his family, whose grief is shared by many.