

1 HR334
2 160025-1
3 By Representatives Shedd, Buttram, Standridge and Henry
4 RFD:
5 First Read: 13-MAR-14

8 HONORING THE LEGACY OF DR. BEN JOHNSON, FIRST
9 PRESIDENT OF WALLACE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN HANCEVILLE.

10
11 WHEREAS, Dr. Ben Johnson was appointed in 1965 by
12 the Alabama State Board of Education as the first president of
13 what was then called the George C. Wallace Trade School of
14 Cullman County, and later became Wallace State; and

15 WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson served as president of the
16 college from 1964 to 1971 after serving as principal at
17 Cullman County area schools and as professor at St. Bernard
18 College; and

19 WHEREAS, while at Wallace State, Dr. Johnson was a
20 pioneer and visionary leader of what would become the Alabama
21 Community College System and was entrusted with the initial
22 development of curriculum standards for technical programs,
23 both in Cullman County and statewide; and

24 WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson directed the college in its
25 infancy and watched the enrollment numbers increase from 59
26 students at its inception to 295 by his departure in 1971; and

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson left Wallace State to work on
2 completing his doctorate at Auburn University, and went on to
3 serve as an administrator at Ayers State Technical College and
4 Gadsden State Community College; and

5 WHEREAS, before his educational career, Dr. Johnson
6 joined the Navy at age 17, earning a Bronze Star and
7 meritorious service ribbons for his exemplary duty in six
8 invasions, including Iwo Jima, Saipan, and Midway Islands, in
9 World War II; and

10 WHEREAS, after retirement, Dr. Johnson purchased The
11 Cullman Tribune and served as the paper's editor and
12 publisher; and

13 WHEREAS, before his death, Dr. Johnson published a
14 memoir, *Being Frank*, explaining the difficulties he faced as a
15 child; those difficult circumstances forged him to work to
16 improve the quality of his life and the lives of others
17 through education, persistence toward high ideals, and
18 personal sacrifice; and

19 WHEREAS, Dr. Johnson's legacy continued in the
20 community college system with his wife, Ruby Johnson, teaching
21 English at Wallace State for more than 30 years, his daughter,
22 Dr. Mell Johnson, previously teaching English at Wallace State
23 and his son, John Johnson, serving at length as president of
24 Alabama Southern Community College, previously known as
25 Patrick Henry Junior College; now therefore,

26 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
27 THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, That on this day we honor the

1 legacy of Dr. Ben Johnson and his contributions to Wallace
2 State Community College and the great State of Alabama.