

SJR17 INTRODUCED



1 SJR17

2 F2E2DCD-1

3 By Senators Waggoner, Albritton, Allen, Barfoot, Beasley,
4 Bell, Butler, Carnley, Chambliss, Chesteen, Coleman,
5 Coleman-Madison, Elliott, Figures, Givhan, Gudger, Hatcher,
6 Hovey, Jones, Kelley, Kitchens, Livingston, Melson, Orr,
7 Price, Reed, Roberts, Sessions, Shelnutt, Singleton,
8 Smitherman, Stewart, Stutts, Weaver, Williams

9 RFD:

10 First Read: 12-Feb-25



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4 SJR____ COMMENDING THE HONORABLE JUDGE CAROLE SMITHERMAN ON
5 HER RETIREMENT.

6

7 WHEREAS, highest commendations and congratulations are
8 herein proudly presented to the Honorable Judge Carole
9 Smitherman for outstanding professional achievement on the
10 occasion of her retirement from her position as Circuit
11 Judge in the Civil Division of Jefferson County at the end
12 of her term in January 2025; a member of the Rock City
13 Church, she firmly believes the Lord sent her to serve; and

14 WHEREAS, Judge Smitherman has served on the Tenth
15 Judicial Circuit Court since 2012, devoting her life to
16 public service, breaking barriers, and achieving historic
17 firsts as a trailblazer in Alabama's legal and political
18 arenas; and

19 WHEREAS, Carole Caitlin Smitherman was born on
20 September 25, 1952, in Birmingham, Alabama, to Willie and
21 Rochelle Davis, and reared by her grandparents, Jerry and
22 Thelma Catlin, who instilled in her the values of education,
23 hard work, and service; and

24 WHEREAS, she graduated from Spelman College in 1973
25 and earned her Juris Doctor from Miles Law School in 1979,
26 where she graduated first in her class, the only woman to do
27 so; and

28 WHEREAS, in 1979, Judge Smitherman began her

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29 illustrious legal career as the first woman of color to
30 serve as a Deputy District Attorney in Jefferson County,
31 later founding the county's first Victim Assistance Program
32 to provide care and support for crime victims and their
33 families; and

34 WHEREAS, she has served with distinction as a
35 Birmingham Municipal Judge, the first woman of color
36 appointed as a Circuit Court Judge in Alabama, a prosecutor
37 for the City of Irondale, a Constitutional Law professor at
38 Miles Law School, and a member of the Birmingham City
39 Council, where she became the first woman of color to serve
40 as its president; and

41 WHEREAS, in 2009, Judge Smitherman was sworn in as
42 the 31st Mayor of Birmingham, becoming the city's first
43 female mayor and its first woman of color to hold this
44 esteemed office; and

45 WHEREAS, her numerous accolades, including the
46 Alabama Bar Association Maude McLure Kelly Award, induction
47 into the Magic City Bar Association Hall of Fame, and
48 recognition from the Birmingham Bar Association with a
49 Lifetime Achievement Award, underscore her extraordinary
50 contributions to the legal profession and public service;
51 and

52 WHEREAS, Judge Smitherman's greatest joy and proudest
53 achievement is her family; in 1980, she married the esteemed
54 Rodger Smitherman, whom she lovingly describes as "the air
55 beneath her wings"; in 1992, the two joined forces in
56 private practice, establishing Smitherman & Smitherman Law

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57 Firm, and in 1994, he was elected to the Alabama State
58 Senate; and

59 WHEREAS, together, they built a legacy of love and
60 success, raising five cherished children, the late and
61 beloved Roderick, Rodger Mell II, Tonya Renee, Mary Elaine,
62 and Crystal Nicole; following in her mother's footsteps,
63 Crystal was appointed as the Birmingham City Councilor for
64 District 6, later serving as President Pro Tempore of the
65 Council, continuing the family's tradition of leadership and
66 service to Birmingham; Judge Smitherman is also a devoted
67 grandmother to six beloved grandchildren, Naomi, Justin,
68 Tony, Leah, Jaden, and Noah; and cherishes her granddog,
69 Charlie; and

70 WHEREAS, through the years, she has earned widespread
71 respect for her fairness, dedication, and competence; Judge
72 Smitherman's presence on the bench will be greatly missed,
73 but her retirement plans call for resuming private practice
74 and continuing her life of service to her community; now
75 therefore,

76 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
77 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That Judge Carole Smitherman is
78 highly honored and commended, and this resolution is offered
79 to her with deepest admiration and appreciation for her
80 immeasurable service to the State of Alabama, as well as
81 with sincere best wishes for continued success in all future
82 endeavors.