

Senate Resolution 587

By: Senator Ragan of the 11th

### A RESOLUTION

1 Commending and congratulating John W. Whitaker of Moultrie, Georgia; and for other  
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Norfolk Southern Railway Co. recently dedicated the John W. Whitaker  
4 intermodal terminal in Austell, Georgia; and

5 WHEREAS, the terminal is named for John Wesley Whitaker, who retired in 1981 from his  
6 last railroad position as trainmaster; and

7 WHEREAS, John W. Whitaker began his illustrious railroad career as a youth with a summer  
8 job on the Georgia Northern Railway; and

9 WHEREAS, he answered his country's call to defend freedom during World War II and  
10 trained to be one of the famed Tuskegee Airmen, but did not complete his training before the  
11 war ended; and

12 WHEREAS, as a locomotive fireman on the Central of Georgia Railway after the war, he  
13 was instrumental in forming the International Brotherhood of Railroad Employees to address  
14 workplace discrimination issues, and he served valiantly as the union's second president; and

15 WHEREAS, during the 1950's, the International Brotherhood of Railroad Employees brought  
16 a courageous lawsuit which contributed to the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown*  
17 *v. Board of Education* which declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional in 1954;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, he became the first African-American locomotive engineer for the Central of  
20 Georgia in 1964; and

1 WHEREAS, he was named road foreman of engines for Southern Railway, serving as that  
2 railroad's first African-American transportation officer and was one of Southern's first road  
3 foremen instructors in the locomotive engineer training program; and

4 WHEREAS, it is altogether fitting and proper that this integral part of the most  
5 comprehensive intermodal network in the eastern part of the nation has been named for a  
6 man of such courageous leadership and exemplary job performance.

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body  
8 commend John W. Whitaker for his many years of dedicated service to his railroad  
9 employers and his fellow workers and congratulate him on this appropriate honor.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed  
11 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to John W. Whitaker.