

House Resolution 602

By: Representatives Bruce of the 45th, Holmes of the 48th, Post 1, Thomas of the 43rd, Post 1, Brooks of the 47th, Sailor of the 61st, Post 1, and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life of the Honorable Henrietta Mathis Canty and inviting her children, D'Jaris,
2 Clarence, Kevin, Kirk, and Dean Canty, to appear before the House of Representatives; and
3 for other purposes.
- 4 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia truly lost one of its most conscientious citizens and most
5 dynamic leaders upon the passing of Henrietta Mathis Canty; and
- 6 WHEREAS, the Honorable Henrietta Mathis Canty was born October 23, 1928, in Abbeville,
7 S.C., to the late James Henry Mathis and the late Sophronia Cater Mathis-Edwards; and
- 8 WHEREAS, Mrs. Canty received her early education in the Abbeville County School System
9 in Abbeville, S.C., and at age 16, she enrolled in Talladega College, Talladega, Alabama,
10 for two years and completed her undergraduate education in 1950 at Johnson C. Smith in
11 Charlotte, N.C., graduating cum laude; and
- 12 WHEREAS, she did further studies at Temple University and obtained a Masters Degree
13 from the Wharton School of Commerce and Finance in the Teaching of Mathematics; and
- 14 WHEREAS, she was united in holy matrimony to the late Clarence Canty on March 9, 1952,
15 and a daughter and four sons were born to this union, D'Jaris Ann, Clarence Maurice, Kevin
16 Stacey, Kirk Bradford, and Dean Lennard; and
- 17 WHEREAS, Mrs. Canty's illustrious community service career began at the age of 18 when
18 she organized a NAACP chapter with teachers in Calhoun Falls, S.C.; and
- 19 WHEREAS, Mrs. Canty served in the Office of Economic Opportunity, community Action
20 Program, and was the Regional Director serving Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina in
21 initiating the Head Start Program; and

1 WHEREAS, her exposure to the political arena began when she resided in Philadelphia,
2 Pennsylvania, where she was active in the Republican Party, and when she moved to Atlanta,
3 she became the assistant campaign manager for the late Honorable Q.V. Williamson, the first
4 black City Alderman; and

5 WHEREAS, she also worked closely with several other campaigns, including Ben Brown,
6 Leroy Johnson, and Julian Bond; and

7 WHEREAS, she was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives, District 38, in June,
8 1975, and served in that position until her resignation, in 1979, to become the Assistant
9 Commissioner of Agriculture for the State of Georgia in 1980, making her the first woman
10 and African American to hold such a position; and

11 WHEREAS, her proudest accomplishments were the writing and passing of Georgia's First
12 Fair Housing Bill, the M. L. King exit from I-20 to I-285, and Benjamin E. Mays High
13 School; and

14 WHEREAS, Mrs. Canty was an active parent and president of the PTA for West Manor
15 Elementary, Southwest and Mays High Schools; and she served on the Board of Trustees of
16 Southwest Community Hospital for many years and was a lifetime member of the National
17 Association for the Advancement of Colored People since 1985; and

18 WHEREAS, her love for community service led her to run for her old house seat in newly
19 created District 52, which she won and served from 1990-1998, when she resigned to run for
20 State Insurance Commissioner; and

21 WHEREAS, her political passion was to expose inequities in education, employment,
22 insurance redlining, healthcare, housing, redistricting, and taxes and she believed in paving
23 the way and opening doors for all those who needed it; and

24 WHEREAS, Mrs. Canty received numerous community service awards and outstanding
25 citizenship and public service awards from organizations such as: The North American
26 Dental Society; Southwest Community Constituents; Canby Lane School; Benjamin E.
27 Mays High School; Atlanta Medical Association; Atlanta Associated Contractors and Trade
28 Council; North Carolina Support our Students Conference; Union City of Georgia's Mayor
29 and City Council; Georgia Women Against Crime, Inc.; U.S. Department of Health and
30 Human Services - Region IV; United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition

1 Services; The Georgia Coalition of Black Women, Inc.; and Concerned Black Clergy, Inc.,
2 of Metropolitan, Inc., just to name a few; and

3 WHEREAS, Mrs. Canty died as she lived, helping others, on Saturday, November 9, 2002,
4 in Columbia, S.C., on a return trip from Baltimore, Maryland, seeking medical help for a
5 sister-in-law.

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
7 the members of this body honor the extraordinary life of achievement and public service of
8 Henrietta Mathis Canty, express their immense gratitude for her contributions to the State of
9 Georgia, and convey their deepest sympathy to her family.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that D'Jaris, Clarence, Kevin, Kirk, and Dean Canty are
11 invited to appear before the House of Representatives at a date and time to be determined by
12 the Speaker.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
14 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of Henrietta
15 Mathis Canty.