

House Resolution 335

By: Representatives Porter of the 143rd, Powell of the 29th, Smyre of the 132nd, Hugley of the 133rd, Randall of the 138th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring and remembering the life of Samuel Ernest Vandiver, former Governor of Georgia;
2 and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, on July 3, 1918, in the northeast Georgia community of Canon, near Lavonia,
4 Samuel Ernest Vandiver was born to Samuel Ernest and Vanna Bowers Vandiver; and

5 WHEREAS, he attended the University of Georgia where he was president of five student
6 organizations, receiving his bachelor's degree in 1940 and his law degree in 1942; and

7 WHEREAS, he served his country with great honor and pride in the Army Air Force during
8 World War II and was assigned as defense counsel for the Air Force in Arizona and, later,
9 as a legal adviser to individual airmen; and

10 WHEREAS, he was elected as mayor of Lavonia in 1945, was appointed as adjutant general
11 of Georgia under Governor Herman Talmadge's administration in 1948, and was elected as
12 lieutenant governor in 1954; and

13 WHEREAS, in one of the most remarkable gubernatorial election landslides in recent
14 Georgia history, he carried 156 counties, 400 county unit votes, and 499,477 popular votes
15 compared to his two opponents' total of 120,929 votes; and

16 WHEREAS, when he first came to office as governor in 1959 amid a spending scandal, he
17 immediately ordered most state departments and agencies to cut expenditures by 10 percent,
18 implemented efficient business practices, and appointed capable directors to the most
19 troubled departments, exposing and eliminating corruption within the government's executive
20 branch; and

1 WHEREAS, his leadership guided Georgia during the years of desegregation, and he acted
2 with courage and great personal strength to keep Georgia's schools open and abide by the
3 laws of the nation despite intense opposition; and

4 WHEREAS, upon learning of the stunning abuses suffered by the mentally ill at the
5 Milledgeville State Hospital and personally touring the facility with his wife, he launched an
6 investigation which led to the legislature's approval of \$11 million for new facilities and
7 paved the way for sweeping reforms in mental health services and programs; and

8 WHEREAS, under his tenure, construction began on the state Archives Building, which
9 opened in 1965, preserving records in a state where 49 courthouses had burned until being
10 replaced in the 1990's; and

11 WHEREAS, with great foresight and wisdom, he purchased Colonels Island near Brunswick,
12 which now serves as a valuable shipping port; and

13 WHEREAS, as a private citizen, he chaired the 1963 Rapid Transit Committee of 100, which
14 helped to successfully lobby for a commuter train network, now MARTA, in metro Atlanta;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, he was a faithful and beloved husband to the former First Lady of Georgia, Mrs.
17 Sybil Elizabeth "Betty" Vandiver; a devoted father to three children, Mr. S. Ernest "Chip"
18 Vandiver III, Ms. Beth Vandiver, and Ms. Jane Kidd, who is currently carrying on his
19 distinguished political legacy as a member of the Georgia House of Representatives; and a
20 loving grandfather to his four precious grandchildren; and

21 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia mourns the loss of this monumental statesman whose
22 steadfast leadership and great personal strength guided the citizens of this state through
23 trying times with great dignity and moral integrity.

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
25 the members of this body join together to express their deepest regret at the passing of former
26 Governor Samuel Ernest Vandiver and extend their most sincere condolences to his family.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
28 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of former
29 Governor Samuel Ernest Vandiver.