

Senate Bill 88

By: Senator Jackson of the 2nd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50, relating to other state symbols, so as to provide
2 that the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum shall be the official state civil rights
3 museum; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

4 **SECTION 1.**

5 WHEREAS, Savannah has a long and storied role in the Civil Rights Movement, beginning
6 with a meeting between General Sherman and Secretary of War Stanton and 20 black leaders
7 on January 12, 1865, to discuss the matter of emancipation; and

8 WHEREAS, the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum, recently named "Georgia's Best
9 New History Museum," is named in honor of the late Dr. Ralph Mark Gilbert, the father of
10 Savannah's modern day Civil Rights Movement and fearless National Association for the
11 Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) leader known for much more than his outspoken
12 campaigns for civil rights; he was a nationally known orator, pulpiter, and playwright,
13 producing religious dramas, known as passion plays, throughout the country; and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. Gilbert served as pastor of historic First African Baptist Church on Franklin
15 Square in Savannah for 16 years and reorganized the Savannah Branch of the NAACP and
16 served as president for eight years, convening the first state conference attended by branches
17 from Savannah, Brunswick, Dublin, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, Albany, and three other
18 branches whose identities are uncertain. Under his courageous leadership, more than 40
19 NAACP branches were organized in Georgia by 1950; and

20 WHEREAS, Georgia's best new history museum chronicles the civil rights struggle of
21 Georgia's oldest African American community from slavery to the present in three floors of
22 handsome photographic and interactive exhibits, including an NAACP Organization exhibit,
23 a fiber optic map of 87 significant civil rights sites/events, a lunch counter where "sit-ins"
24 occurred, segregation exhibits, and video presentation, all part of the continuous education

25 of the public on the history of the civil rights struggle in Savannah and Georgia. The
26 museum is located in historic Savannah in a five-level building that was erected in 1914 as
27 the Wage Earners Savings and Loan Bank for black Savannahians, the largest black bank in
28 the country at that time.

29 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

30 **SECTION 2.**

31 Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50, relating to other state symbols, is amended by adding a
32 new Code section to read as follows:

33 "50-3-85.

34 The Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum is designated the official Georgia civil rights
35 museum."

36 **SECTION 3.**

37 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.