

House Resolution 85

By: Representative Brooks of the 55th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Eugene Patterson; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished citizens
3 with the passing of Mr. Eugene Patterson on January 12, 2013; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Mr. Patterson was born on October 15, 1923, in Valdosta; and
- 5 WHEREAS, he served as a guardian of this nation's freedom and liberty with the United
6 States Army, valiantly and courageously protecting his fellow Americans during World War
7 II fighting with General George S. Patton's Third Army; and
- 8 WHEREAS, Mr. Patterson's experience during the war offered the first escape from the
9 segregationist South and let him see, in a foreign setting, where race hatred inevitably led;
10 and
- 11 WHEREAS, he served as executive editor of both the *Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta*
12 *Constitution* from 1956 to 1960, and as editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* from 1960 to 1968,
13 and was considered a beacon of progressive reform in the segregationist South; and
- 14 WHEREAS, in 1961, Mr. Patterson encouraged Governor Ernest Vandiver to stand fast
15 against racial violence designed to frustrate the desegregation of the University of Georgia;
16 and
- 17 WHEREAS, he followed Atlanta mayor Ivan Allen onto Atlanta's streets on nights when the
18 city experienced violence, vandalism, and rioting; and
- 19 WHEREAS, Mr. Patterson was most well known for his emotional column "A Flower for
20 the Graves," which was written on September 15, 1963, the day he learned that four young
21 girls had been murdered in the bombing of their Birmingham, Alabama, church; and

22 WHEREAS, known for his integrity, intelligence, and fairness, he later stalwartly refused to
23 publish FBI reports about the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s private life, deeming it "not our
24 kind of journalism"; and

25 WHEREAS, Mr. Patterson won a Pulitzer Prize in 1967 for his editorials supporting civil
26 rights for African Americans and combating white demagogues in Georgia and throughout
27 the South; and

28 WHEREAS, he gave inspiration to many through his high ideals, morals, and optimism about
29 the goodness of humanity, and the deep concern he demonstrated for his fellow citizens,
30 regardless of race, was admired by others; and

31 WHEREAS, Mr. Patterson was a person of enormous courage, wisdom, and fortitude and,
32 by the example he made of his life, he made this world a better place in which to live; and

33 WHEREAS, a brave and compassionate man, he will long be remembered for his grace, and
34 this influential editor, writer, and friend will be missed by all who had the great fortune of
35 knowing him.

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
37 the members of this body join in honoring the life and memory of Mr. Eugene Patterson and
38 express their deepest and most sincere sadness at his passing.

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
40 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of Eugene
41 Patterson.