

House Resolution 1769

By: Representatives Smyre of the 135th, Hugley of the 136th, Smith of the 134th, Buckner of the 137th, and Pezold of the 133rd

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Dr. Ophelia DeVore Mitchell; 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 Dr. Ophelia DeVore Mitchell on February 28, 2014; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Dr. DeVore Mitchell was born on August 22, 1921, in Edgefield, South
5 Carolina, to the late John DeVore and Mary Strother DeVore; and
- 6 WHEREAS, known for her pioneering efforts in the fields of beauty, fashion, modeling, and
7 entertainment, she was the first mixed race, African American high fashion model in New
8 York City in the late 1940s; and
- 9 WHEREAS, in 1946, Dr. DeVore Mitchell enrolled in the Vogue School of Modeling, which
10 until that time had excluded women of color; later that year, she, along with four of her
11 colleagues, founded the Grace Del Marco Modeling Agency as a way to help create
12 opportunities for models of color; and
- 13 WHEREAS, in 1948, she created the Ophelia DeVore School of Self-Development and
14 Modeling, opening the doors of modeling and television in the late 1940s and early 1950s
15 for men and women of African American heritage and other minorities in the United States;
16 and
- 17 WHEREAS, Dr. DeVore Mitchell made history in 1959 and 1960 when two of her clients,
18 Ms. Cecilia Cooper and Ms. LaJeune Hundley, were the first Americans to win titles at the
19 Cannes Film Festival, in Paris, France; and
- 20 WHEREAS, as one of the first African American and mixed race models in the United
21 States, Dr. DeVore Mitchell changed the face of the beauty, fashion, and entertainment
22 industries; through her modeling agency and school, she fostered and promoted the careers

23 of some of the country's top African American models, entertainers, and television
24 personalities; and

25 WHEREAS, beginning in the early 1970s, she became the owner/publisher of *The Columbus*
26 *Times* newspaper in Columbus, Georgia, where she set trends in reporting positive news
27 about African Americans; and

28 WHEREAS, during her decades in business, Dr. DeVore Mitchell wrote a column for the
29 Black newspapers of America, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, and served
30 on the board of the organization; she was also a founder of The Black Press Archives at
31 Howard University and was elected several times as the National Secretary of the National
32 Newspaper Publishers Association; and

33 WHEREAS, the organizations in which she held memberships included: the National
34 Association of Market Developers, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the
35 NAACP, the Urban League, Top Ladies of Distinction, the Continental Africa Chamber of
36 Commerce, American Women in Radio and Television, the National Association of Women
37 in Radio and Television, and the National Association of Negro Business and Professional
38 Women; and

39 WHEREAS, she was married to her first husband, Harold Carter, and later married Vernon
40 Mitchell; she was blessed with five remarkable children, Carol, James, Marie, Cheryl, and
41 Michael, nine wonderful grandchildren, and 16 outstanding great-grandchildren; and

42 WHEREAS, a compassionate and generous woman, Dr. DeVore Mitchell will long be
43 remembered for her love of family and friendship, and this loyal gentlewoman and friend
44 will be missed by all who had the great fortune of knowing her.

45 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
46 the members of this body join in honoring the life and memory of Dr. Ophelia DeVore
47 Mitchell and express their deepest and most sincere regret at her passing.

48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
49 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of Dr. Ophelia
50 DeVore Mitchell.