

## House Resolution 396

By: Representatives Jones of the 53<sup>rd</sup> and Gardner of the 57<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing Mr. Willie A. Watkins and dedicating a bridge in his honor; and for other  
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Willie A. Watkins has long been recognized for his expertise as a mortician  
4 and funeral director and the compassionate role he has played during the most difficult time  
5 of a family's life; and

6 WHEREAS, a native of Scottdale, Georgia, Mr. Watkins was called to the mortuary field  
7 at a young age after accompanying his grandmother each weekend to funeral services of  
8 friends and neighbors in the small community and observing how important it was for  
9 families to see their loved ones remembered with dignity and grace; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Watkins's first job was at the age of eight, placing flowers alongside the  
11 hearses for a local funeral home; and

12 WHEREAS, his eagerness to excel in the field of mortuary science was evident when he was  
13 hired as a teenager by Thorton Mortuary, where he learned the heart and soul of the funeral  
14 services business; and

15 WHEREAS, during his sophomore year at Morehouse College, Mr. Watkins left the school  
16 to become part of the first class at Gupton Jones Mortuary College, where he earned an  
17 associate's degree in mortuary science; and

18 WHEREAS, he became a licensed funeral director and embalmer in 1971, and in 1978, at  
19 age 29, he purchased a building in the Historic West End of Atlanta which he would grow  
20 to become the epicenter of a mortuary business empire; and

21 WHEREAS, today, Willie A. Watkins Funeral Home, Inc., has five locations, all of which  
22 are impeccably designed to make guests feel comfortable at a time when they are most ill at  
23 ease, and serves more than 1,000 families a year; and

24 WHEREAS, Mr. Watkins sets the standard for personal service, offering families the release  
25 of doves, signature flower cars, black cars with silver tops, and horse drawn carriages for  
26 processions; and

27 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that the extraordinary accomplishments of  
28 this distinguished Georgian be appropriately recognized by dedicating a bridge in his honor.

29 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ENACTED BY THE GENERAL  
30 ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA that the bridge on Interstate 20 over Joseph E. Lowery  
31 Boulevard in Fulton County is dedicated as the Willie A. Watkins Bridge.

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation is authorized and  
33 directed to erect and maintain appropriate signs dedicating the Willie A. Watkins Bridge.

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
35 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to Mr.  
36 Willie A. Watkins and to the Department of Transportation.