

Senate Resolution 589

By: Senators Orrock of the 36th, Bethel of the 54th, Ramsey, Sr. of the 43rd, Parent of the 42nd and Fort of the 39th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Claude Sitton; 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 Claude Sitton on March 12, 2015; and
- 4 WHEREAS, he was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on December 4, 1925; and
- 5 WHEREAS, he grew up in Rockdale County on his father's farm working alongside African
6 American sharecroppers; and
- 7 WHEREAS, as a journalist, Mr. Sitton bore witness to and scrupulously documented one of
8 the most tumultuous eras in American history; and
- 9 WHEREAS, in six and a half years, he wrote more than 900 stories about the American
10 South for the *New York Times*; and
- 11 WHEREAS, he covered the desegregation of Ole Miss in 1962, Governor George Wallace
12 blocking the schoolhouse doors in 1963, the murder of Medgar Evers, Freedom Rides,
13 sit-ins, marches, and turning points in the Civil Rights Movement; and
- 14 WHEREAS, for two years, he served as a press attaché for the United States Information
15 Agency in Ghana beginning in 1955; and
- 16 WHEREAS, he served as national editor for the *New York Times* and in several senior
17 positions at the *News & Observer* in Raleigh, North Carolina; and
- 18 WHEREAS, following the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer, Mr. Sitton instituted a rule
19 that a staff reporter must cover Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wherever he went, and on

20 April 4, 1968, one of his reporters was in Memphis for the civil rights leader's assassination;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, in 1964, *Newsweek* praised him as "the best daily newspaperman on the
23 Southern scene"; and

24 WHEREAS, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 1983 and the George Polk
25 Award for career achievement in 1991; and

26 WHEREAS, Congressman John Lewis called Mr. Sitton "one of the bravest, most
27 courageous journalists I ever met"; and

28 WHEREAS, Mr. Sitton was united in love and marriage to Eva Whetstone for 61 years and
29 was blessed with two beloved sons, two cherished daughters, and nine wonderful
30 grandchildren; and

31 WHEREAS, a compassionate and gifted man, Claude Sitton will long be remembered for his
32 contributions to honestly and fairly covering in thorough and diligent detail the Civil Rights
33 Movement in the South.

34 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
35 join in honoring the life and memory of Claude Sitton and express their deepest and most
36 sincere regret at his passing.

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
38 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the family of Claude
39 Sitton.