

## House Resolution 859

By: Representatives Kaiser of the 59<sup>th</sup>, Brooks of the 55<sup>th</sup>, Williams of the 168<sup>th</sup>, Smyre of the 135<sup>th</sup>, Randall of the 142<sup>nd</sup>, and others

## A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Curtis Lee Atkinson; 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 Curtis Lee Atkinson on June 26, 2014; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Curtis Atkinson was born on September 12, 1930, in Brunswick, Georgia, a  
5 beloved son of Israel and Irene Atkinson; and
- 6 WHEREAS, he graduated from Risley High School in Brunswick, Georgia, earned a  
7 Bachelor of Arts degree from Fort Valley State College, taught at the Lexington Avenue  
8 School for the Deaf in New York City while earning a Master's degree from Columbia  
9 University, and attended Gallaudet University and Howard University in Washington, D.C.;  
10 and
- 11 WHEREAS, he served as a guardian of this nation's freedom and liberty with the United  
12 States Army, valiantly and courageously protecting his fellow Americans from July,  
13 1951 to July, 1953, during which time he attended Officers Candidate School in Fort  
14 Benning, Georgia; and
- 15 WHEREAS, he served as an educator in Georgia, teaching classes in history and government  
16 in Rockmart and Buchanan, teaching at the Georgia School for the Deaf at Cave Springs,  
17 and serving as a librarian in the Polk County School System; and
- 18 WHEREAS, he served as United States Senator Herman Talmadge's Administrative  
19 Assistant for 11 years, making him the first African American to serve on a United States  
20 Senator's staff since Reconstruction; and
- 21 WHEREAS, Curtis Atkinson worked with numerous government agencies to provide  
22 constituent services for Senator Talmadge and was instrumental in establishing enabling

23 legislation and funding for Morehouse Medical School and coordinating major funding for  
24 Morris Brown College; and

25 WHEREAS, he was appointed Georgia's Assistant Secretary of State on January 11, 1983,  
26 by Secretary of State Max Cleland, which made him one of the highest ranking African  
27 Americans in state government and Georgia's first African American Assistant Secretary of  
28 State; and

29 WHEREAS, Curtis Atkinson, a champion in the area of human relations and service to the  
30 needs of the citizens of Georgia, was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the  
31 Secretary of State's office and was named chairman of Secretary of State Cleland's Agency  
32 Task Force on Economic Development; and

33 WHEREAS, a graduate of Leadership of Georgia and Leadership of Atlanta, he was selected  
34 to participate in the prestigious Toll Fellowship Program sponsored by the Council of State  
35 Governments in 1988; and

36 WHEREAS, Curtis Atkinson was the recipient of many honors and awards, among them the  
37 1983 Horace Mann Bond Award from Fort Valley State College and induction into the Fort  
38 Valley State College Alumni Hall of Fame in 1986; and

39 WHEREAS, he was a member of CDC/ATSDR Chapter of Blacks in Government, Eta  
40 Lambda Chapter of Alphi Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., and the Risley Alumni Association; and

41 WHEREAS, Curtis Atkinson joined the staff of United States Senator Max Cleland as State  
42 Deputy Director in 1996 and was appointed Secretary of Senator Cleland's Campaign  
43 Committee in 2001; and

44 WHEREAS, a man of deep and abiding faith, Curtis Atkinson was an active member of  
45 Butler Street C.M.E. Church for over 40 years, where he was a Steward Emeritus and served  
46 on the Donald Lee Hollowell Foundation Board; and

47 WHEREAS, he was united in love and marriage to Dr. Melvis Evans Atkinson, a native of  
48 Augusta, Georgia; and

49 WHEREAS, Curtis Lee Atkinson was an inspiring civil servant who spent his life working  
50 to make the State of Georgia and the United States a better place in which to live, and he will  
51 be deeply missed by all who had the great fortune of knowing him.

52 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
53 the members of this body join in honoring the life and memory of Curtis Lee Atkinson and  
54 express their deepest and most sincere regret at his passing.

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
56 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the  
57 family of Curtis Lee Atkinson.