

House Resolution 194

By: Representatives Howard of the 124th, Frazier of the 126th, Nelson of the 125th, Prince of the 127th, and Newton of the 123rd

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and honoring the late Dr. John T. Harper, Sr., and Dr. Frank Rumph for their
2 contributions to the desegregation of the Medical College of Georgia; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, the Medical College of Georgia, founded in 1828, accepted its first African
4 American students under the direction and prolific guidance of then-dean Dr. Walter G. Rice
5 50 years ago this year; and

6 WHEREAS, the late Dr. Harper was valedictorian at Hancock Central High School and
7 attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, before moving to Augusta in 1967; and

8 WHEREAS, Dr. Rumph was a top undergraduate of Fort Valley State University who went
9 to graduate school at Atlanta University; and

10 WHEREAS, Drs. Harper and Rumph were both natives of rural Georgia, where opportunities
11 for African Americans were scarce; and

12 WHEREAS, neither man was a stranger to hardships, but both had a burning desire to
13 become physicians and serve others; and

14 WHEREAS, Drs. Harper and Rumph broke racial barriers, enrolling as the first two African
15 American students at the state's public medical school in the fall of 1967; and

16 WHEREAS, both men faced subtle and sometimes blatant racism during medical school, but
17 also had unwavering support from Dr. Rice and from their classmates; and

18 WHEREAS, Dr. Rumph agreed to be part of the medical school's recruitment committee and
19 Dr. Harper served on the MCG admissions committee to ensure that the ground they broke
20 remained open; and

21 WHEREAS, Drs. Harper and Rumph persevered and succeeded in medical school and
22 graduated from the Medical College of Georgia in 1971; and

23 WHEREAS, after graduation, the late Dr. Harper was drafted into the United States Air
24 Force while doing general surgery training at Emory University and served our country as
25 a flight surgeon; and

26 WHEREAS, Dr. Rumph completed an internship at Grady Memorial Hospital, also served
27 his country for five years in the United States Air Force, and completed a residency in
28 anatomical and clinical pathology at Emory; and

29 WHEREAS, the late Dr. Harper returned to Emory to complete his training and practiced as
30 a board certified orthopaedic surgeon for many years in the Atlanta area before retiring in
31 2008; and

32 WHEREAS, Dr. Rumph found his calling in public health, first serving as director of state
33 public health laboratories, then as first director of the state's HIV/AIDS program and
34 eventually as the first black director of the East Central Health District, which includes
35 Augusta; and

36 WHEREAS, Dr. Rumph returned to MCG as a part-time faculty member when he returned
37 to Augusta; and

38 WHEREAS, the contributions of Drs. Harper and Rumph provided the foundation for a
39 legacy of diversity and inclusion at the state's public medical school, which today is ranked
40 among the top ten schools with the most African Americans by *U.S. News and World Report*.

41 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
42 the members of this body recognize and commend the late Dr. John T. Harper, Sr., and Dr.
43 Frank Rumph for their groundbreaking and lasting contributions to medical education in the
44 State of Georgia and beyond.

45 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
46 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the
47 Medical College of Georgia.