

Senate Resolution 1151

By: Senators Williams of the 39th, Orrock of the 36th, Seay of the 34th and James of the 35th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Dr. Rita Jackson Samuels; 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. Rita Jackson Samuels on March 27, 2018; and
- 4 WHEREAS, Dr. Rita Jackson Samuels grew up in poverty in Forsyth, Georgia, and would
5 go on to blaze a trail through history, overcoming barriers to serve in the White House with
6 President Jimmy Carter; and
- 7 WHEREAS, Dr. Samuels began to advocate for civil and women's rights in her youth when
8 she worked for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Operation Breadbasket under
9 the administration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and
- 10 WHEREAS, inspired by the civil rights movement, Dr. Rita Jackson Samuels emerged as
11 one of Georgia's most prolific women's right advocates, founding the Georgia Coalition of
12 Black Women, Inc., in 1980, a women's advocacy training and development organization,
13 and the Women in Government Internship Project in 1999 to assist young women interested
14 in government careers; and
- 15 WHEREAS, Dr. Samuels established Women Flying High, LLC, a highly successful,
16 female-owned consulting and public engagement enterprise in Atlanta, and the firm has been
17 instrumental in forming strategic alliances and joint venture opportunities that increase
18 women's share of government contracts; and
- 19 WHEREAS, she was consistently selected by the *The Informer* as one of the 50 Most
20 Influential Women in Georgia; she was selected by the Atlanta Business League as one of
21 the 100 Most Influential Black Women in Atlanta; and she was named as the 2000 Business

22 Woman of the Year by the National Association of Negro Business and Professional
23 Women's Clubs; and

24 WHEREAS, in 1971, Governor Jimmy Carter appointed her to be coordinator of the
25 Governor's Council on Human Relations, making her the first African American woman in
26 Georgia's history to serve on the executive staff of a Georgia governor; and she would go on
27 to receive numerous appointments from Georgia governors, including appointment to the
28 Georgia State Election Board by Governor Joe Frank Harris and reappointments to the King
29 Commission by Governors Zell Miller and Roy Barnes; and

30 WHEREAS, Dr. Samuels served as a consultant to the Carter White House and to the
31 Community Services Administration, and before her passing, she was serving on the Martin
32 Luther King, Jr., Child Development Center and the Joseph E. Lowery Institute for Justice
33 and Civil Rights; and

34 WHEREAS, she was a person of magnanimous strengths with an unimpeachable reputation
35 for integrity, intelligence, fairness, and kindness, and by the example she made of her life,
36 she made this world a better place in which to live; and

37 WHEREAS, a compassionate and generous woman, Dr. Rita Jackson Samuels will long be
38 remembered for her love of humanity and will be missed by all who had the great fortune of
39 knowing her.

40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
41 join in honoring the life and memory of Dr. Rita Jackson Samuels and express their deepest
42 and most sincere regret at her passing.

43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
44 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the family of
45 Dr. Rita Jackson Samuels.