

Senate Resolution 607

By: Senators James of the 35th, Rhett of the 33rd, Seay of the 34th, Orrock of the 36th, Anderson of the 43rd and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the life and memory of Senator Leroy Johnson; 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 Senator Leroy Johnson; and
- 4 WHEREAS, he recently celebrated his 91st birthday after decades of exceptional service to
5 the State of Georgia as an educator, a government employee and elected official, and a
6 renowned lawyer. He also worked in countless charities and organizations; and
- 7 WHEREAS, he was a pioneer and trailblazer even during his youth; and
- 8 WHEREAS, Senator Johnson was the first African American hired by the Fulton County
9 District Attorney's Office and he worked there as a criminal investigator from 1957 to 1962.
10 He often worked pro bono for those who needed legal representation but were unable to
11 afford an attorney; and
- 12 WHEREAS, he was an active supporter of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1960, he was one
13 of several community leaders who advised student leaders during their mass sit-ins at Rich's
14 Department Store lunch counters; and
- 15 WHEREAS, Senator Johnson demonstrated his exceptional mind and character when, in
16 1962, he became the first African American elected to the Georgia State Legislature since
17 1907 and the first African American ever elected to the Georgia State Senate, serving the
18 newly created 37th District and serving alongside freshman legislator Jimmy Carter,
19 sophomore legislator Zell Miller, and the late Governor Carl Sanders; and
- 20 WHEREAS, he was responsible for single-handedly restarting the career of boxing legend
21 Muhammad Ali by staging a boxing match at the Municipal Auditorium in Atlanta between
22 former heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali and Jerry Quarry; and

23 WHEREAS, in 2017, he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the State Bar of
24 Georgia, its highest recognition, for his long and distinguished commitment to volunteer
25 participation in the community throughout his legal career; and

26 WHEREAS, State Senator Donzella Johnson James was the second cosigner to legislation
27 that immortalized Senator Johnson by commissioning and hanging his portrait next to the
28 Senate chambers as well as renaming a portion of Fulton Industrial Boulevard in his honor;
29 and

30 WHEREAS, he gave inspiration to many through his high ideals, morals, and deep concern
31 for his fellow citizens, and the devotion, patience, and understanding he demonstrated to his
32 family and friends were admired by others; and

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

36 WHEREAS, a compassionate and generous man, Senator Leroy Johnson will long be
37 remembered for his love of family, friendship, and community and will be missed by all who
38 had the great fortune of knowing him.

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
40 join in honoring the life and memory of Senator Leroy Johnson and express their deepest and
41 most sincere regret at his passing.

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
43 to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to the family of
44 Senator Leroy Johnson.