

SENATE RESOLUTION 28

By Tate

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Deanie Parker of Memphis upon being named as an honoree at the Fifth Annual African American Legacy Awards.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those outstanding individuals who, through their valiant efforts, serve as advocates of equality and as citizens of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable individual is Deanie Parker of Memphis, one of thirteen Memphis residents who will be honored on April 8, 2011, at the Fifth Annual African American Legacy Awards, which the North Memphis District of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church hosts each year to recognize a diverse group of pioneers and trailblazers of the civil and human rights movements; and

WHEREAS, Reverend C. Robert Finch, the Presiding Elder of the North Memphis District of the AME Church, created the African American Legacy Awards in 2007 with the understanding that there were residents of Memphis who had made significant contributions to the Civil Rights Movement whose efforts should be commemorated; and

WHEREAS, this year's illustrious list of thirteen honorees includes Deanie Parker, a former singer and songwriter for Stax Records; and

WHEREAS, Deanie Parker made her way to the Stax studios by winning a local talent contest, in which an audition at Stax was the prize; and

WHEREAS, after recording "My Imaginary Guy" with the Valadores in 1962 and a few other singles, Ms. Parker decided to work behind-the-scenes at Stax and was hired as the company's first Director of Publicity; and

WHEREAS, in the years that followed, she served in several departments at Stax, including publicity, artist relations, songwriting, promotions, photography, and she worked in the Satellite Record Shop; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure at Stax, Ms. Parker became a driving force in the record industry, with her songs being recorded by several notable artists, including Ann Peebles, Otis Redding, Albert King, and later by artists such as Simply Red and Bette Midler; and

WHEREAS, Deanie Parker stayed with Stax Records until its closing in 1976, at which time she went back to college to finish her master's degree in public administration, which she earned from the University of Memphis before earning a Doctorate of Humane Letters from LeMoyne-Owen College; and

WHEREAS, in the decades between Stax's closing and the opening of the Stax Museum of American Soul Music in 2002, Ms. Parker served in various positions with several employers, including at a local television station, as the Vice President of Communications and Marketing at the Regional Medical Center in Memphis, the Assistant Director of Memphis in May, the 1996 Interim Director of the Memphis in May Festival saluting Brazil, and as the President and Chief Executive Officer of Soulsville, the parent company behind the Stax Museum, the position in which she served from the museum's founding until her retirement in late 2007; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, Deanie Parker made a career move into the film industry, serving as executive producer of the film, *I Am A Man*, a documentary about the 1968 sanitation strike which brought Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to Memphis, and for which Ms. Parker also co-wrote the film's title song; and

WHEREAS, she has graciously donated her time and energies to numerous organizations, including serving on the boards of the Rock n' Soul Museum, Play It Again Memphis, and the Tennessee Arts Commission; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Ms. Parker is a 2003 recipient of the University of Memphis University College Alumni Achievement Award and the PRSA Communicator of the Year Award, and she is a 2004 recipient of the Women of Achievement Award for Initiative; and

WHEREAS, this legislative body finds it appropriate to commend Deanie Parker, an extraordinary advocate of equality who has served as the highest caliber of role model in the civil and human rights movements and whom all would do well to emulate; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby join with the good people of Memphis in celebrating Deanie Parker upon being named as an honoree at the Fifth Annual African American Legacy Awards, commend her lifetime of outstanding achievements, and extend to her our best wishes for every success in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.