

Filed for intro on  
House Bill \_\_\_\_\_  
By  
\_\_\_\_\_

Senate No. SJR0074  
By Harper

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Howard Cornelius Gentry, Sr. former Coach and Athletic Director at Tennessee State University.

WHEREAS, commencing the game of life on April 15, 1921, in Columbus, Ohio, and having run this earthly race with patience, perseverance and overcoming such obstacles as segregation, limited resources and, lastly, cancer, Howard Cornelius Gentry, Sr., the gentle giant, crossed the finish line into immortality on Tuesday, February 14, 1995; and

WHEREAS, he was one of eight children born to the late James and Della Gentry. His early education was in the Columbus, Ohio, public school system, where he excelled in football, basketball and track and was named All-City football player for two consecutive years. Earning an athletic scholarship to Florida A&M University, he continued his successful journey and received a bachelor's degree in 1943 in health and physical education. Later, he received his master's degree from Ohio State University. His success as a football player -- All-conference and All-American tackle -- opened doors to his life's career which took him to North Carolina A&T, Wilberforce State University (Ohio), and, finally, to Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, from assistant football coach to head baseball coach with a 1947 baseball championship team to head football coach and athletic director, Howard C. Gentry, Sr.,

affectionately known as “Tubby,” amassed many honors, awards and recognitions. He was “Coach of the Year” in 1956, and took his team to the national championship. His excellent career record as head football coach included 42 wins, 10 losses and one tie; and

WHEREAS, under his astute athletic directorship, the TSU athletic program flourished. TSU’s football teams posted a 24-game winning streak, played their first post-season game against an NCAA-affiliated team, and had their first regionally televised game broadcasted on ABC. The basketball team played in all but two NCAA Division II regional tournaments, winning four times and earning second-through-fourth places four times. The famous Tigerbelles women’s track team continued its upsurge with distinction nationally and internationally. TSU became one of the nation’s top schools for professional football draftees, and many of its players went on to earn professional football honors; and

WHEREAS, other honors for Howard Gentry, Sr., were: induction into the Citizens Savings Athletic Foundation Hall of Fame for Directors of Athletics; induction into the FAMU Sports Hall of Fame; the TSU Outstanding Service Award; the Distinguished Service Award from the NCAA council; induction into the TSU Sports Hall of Fame; induction into the State of Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame; and his greatest honor, the naming of the Howard C. Gentry Physical Education, Recreation and Convocation Complex at TSU. He retired from the University after 27 years of diligent service as a teacher, coach and administrator; and

WHEREAS, his exemplary commitment to civic, community and religious activities included: being a charter member and past president of the Optimist Club; life member of the NAACP; vice chair of the Metro Nashville Auditorium Commission; chair of the board of directors of the Kelly Miller Smith Towers; membership in the National Coalition to Save Black Colleges and the WDCN-Television Advisory Committee. At First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill, where he was active and involved in many areas, he was a dedicated former member of the Sanctuary Choir and Men’s Chorus, and co-chair of the advisory board for the Ennix-Jones Center; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his loving wife, Carrie McLaughlin; his devoted children, Carol Gentry (Alfonsa) Johnson of Los Angeles, California; Howard C. (Judy) Gentry, Jr. of Nashville; his grandchildren, Tracy Johnson of Los Angeles, Andre P. Johnson of Washington, D.C., and Cristiana M. Gentry and Courtnei M. Gentry, both of Nashville; two sisters, Mary Angeline Greer and Bessie Newby-Smith, both of Columbus, Ohio; two brothers, Harry A. (Lois) Gentry and Joseph (Zenobia) Gentry, both of Columbus; sisters-in-law Edna Sullivan of Greenville, South Carolina, and Mattie Watson of Freeport Long Island, New York; and a host of nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause in our deliberations to honor the memory of Howard Gentry, Sr., remembering his numerous contributions to collegiate athletics, the State of Tennessee, Tennessee State University, and to countless individual players, who are successful today because of the outstanding example he set; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Coach Howard Gentry and express our deepest condolences to his family and friends at his passing.

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

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