

By: Senators R. Murdock, J. Boyd, J. Bryant, Caldwell, L. Chesterfield, A. Clark, Crowell, B. Davis, Dees, J. Dismang, J. Dotson, J. English, Flippo, S. Flowers, Gilmore, K. Hammer, Hester, Hickey, Hill, Irvin, B. Johnson, M. Johnson, B. King, G. Leding, F. Love, M. McKee, J. Payton, C. Penzo, J. Petty, Rice, Stone, G. Stubblefield, D. Sullivan, C. Tucker, D. Wallace

SENATE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

TO REMEMBER SENATOR ROY C. "BILL" LEWELLEN, JR. AND
TO RECOGNIZE HIS DEDICATED SERVICE AND INVALUABLE
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF ARKANSAS AND TO HIS
LOCAL COMMUNITY.

Subtitle

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WHEREAS, former Arkansas State Senator Roy C. "Bill" Lewellen, Jr. of Marianna passed away on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at the age of 71; and

WHEREAS, born on November 18, 1951, Bill Lewellen was the son of Roy C. Lewellen Sr. and Ethel Brewer, the nephew of Arkansas State Representative John Lewellen and State Representative Wilhelmina Lewellen, and the cousin of former United States Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater; and

WHEREAS, Bill Lewellen received his bachelor's degree from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and his Juris Doctor from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, William H. Bowen School of Law; and

WHEREAS, Bill Lewellen was first elected to the Arkansas Senate in 1990



and was the second Black person to serve in the Arkansas Senate in the 20th century; and

WHEREAS, prior to his election to the Arkansas Senate, Bill Lewellen served on the Marianna City Council; and

WHEREAS, Senator Lewellen represented eastern Arkansas from 1991 through 2000, served on the Senate Insurance and Commerce Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee, was Senate co-chair of the Joint Legislative Facilities Committee, vice chair of the Senate Rules Committee, and a member of the Joint Budget Committee and the Joint Performance Review Committee; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure with the Arkansas Senate, Senator Lewellen sponsored historic legislation that included legislation that created the Arkansas Minority Health Commission and the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, Senator Lewellen served as an attorney for the Lake View School District in its fight for an equitable and efficient public school system and after years of litigation, the state Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Lake View School District, citing the state's constitutional duty to provide all Arkansas children with an adequate and equitable education, regardless of the prosperity or poverty of the region in which they lived; and

WHEREAS, after leaving the Arkansas Senate, Bill Lewellen continued to advocate for small, rural school districts facing consolidation and inequitable treatment as one (1) of only two (2) Black lawyers in Lee County; and

WHEREAS, Bill Lewellen fought to represent his clients and to help remedy injustices wherever he could and his dedication led him to receive numerous local, state, and national recognitions throughout his lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Senator Lewellen was preceded in death by his wife of forty-three (43) years, Doris Ann Brantley Lewellen; and

WHEREAS, while Senator Lewellen was committed to improving the lives of all Arkansans, he was well-known as being a devoted father and mentor to his children Adrienne Lewellen, Roy Lewellen, III, Michael Lewellen, Marcus Lewellen, Marco Lewellen, and Marshall Lewellen, as well as a loving grandfather to his six (6) grandchildren,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the Senate remember Senator Bill Lewellen and recognize his commitment to hard work, enormous contributions, and service to the State of Arkansas and his local community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption, a copy of this resolution be provided to the family of Roy C. "Bill" Lewellen, Jr. by the Secretary of the Senate.