

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 93

BY SENATOR COLOMB

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend Lynn Whitfield on her many accomplishments.

WHEREAS, Lynn Whitfield was born Lynn Butler-Smith in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to Valerian Smith and Jean Butler-Smith; and

WHEREAS, she is the eldest of four children and a third-generation graduate from Howard University; and

WHEREAS, her father was instrumental in developing Lynn's initial interest in acting and was a prime figure in forming community theater in Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, first garnering attention on the stage by studying and performing with the Black Repertory Company in Washington, DC; she married one of the company's cofounders and pioneers of black theatre, Vantile Whitfield, in 1974; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Whitfield eventually moved to New York City and appeared off-Broadway in such shows as *The Great Macdaddy* and *Showdown* before earning acclaim in the 1977 Los Angeles production of the landmark black play *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide . . . When the Rainbow Is Enuf*; and

WHEREAS, her Hollywood career unfolded under a talent development program at Columbia Pictures in 1979, appearing on such established television shows as *Hill Street Blues*; and

WHEREAS, she made her film debut in *Doctor Detroit* in 1983 and doled out a number of supporting roles in other popular films such as *Silverado* in 1985, *The Slugger's Wife* in 1985, *Jaws: The Revenge* in 1987, and *Dead Aim* in 1987; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Whitfield garnered the most attention working on television in leading and supporting roles; and

WHEREAS, her early highlights include topical social dramas such as *The George McKenna Story* in 1986, *Johnnie Mae Gibson: FBI* in 1986, and Oprah Winfrey's historical miniseries *The Women of Brewster Place* in 1989; and

WHEREAS, she played classy, intelligent professional woman in series television shows such as *Heartbeat* in 1988 and *Equal Justice* in 1990; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Whitfield achieved wide recognition in the title role of *The Josephine Baker Story* in 1991, which required her to age from eighteen years old to sixty-eight; and

WHEREAS, for that role, she won a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Miniseries or a Movie, the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Actress in a Television Movie, Mini-Series or Dramatic Special, and was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress - Miniseries or Television Film; and

WHEREAS, after her breakthrough role as Josephine Baker, Ms. Whitfield had the recurring role in the legal drama *Equal Justice* and continued her career starring in made-for-television movies including *A Triumph of the Heart: The Ricky Bell Story* in 1991, *Taking the Heat* in 1993, *State of Emergency* in 1994, *Sophie and Moonhanger* in 1996, *The Wedding* in 1998, *The Color of Courage* in 1998, and *Deep in My Heart* in 1999; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, Ms. Whitfield earned an NAACP Image Award for her role in the miniseries *Stompin' at the Savoy*, appeared in Pauly Shore's comedy *In the Army Now* in 1994, and returned to series television alongside Bill Cosby in the short-lived *The Cosby Mysteries* in 1994; and

WHEREAS, she also appeared in the films *A Thin Line Between Love and Hate* in 1996, *Gone Fishin'* in 1997, *The Planet of Junior Brown* in 1997, and earned excellent reviews for her supporting work in *Eve's Bayou* in 1997, a role that drew on her Louisiana heritage; and

WHEREAS, Ms Whitfield starred as Dortha Garibaldi in two Disney Channel films, *The Cheetah Girls* in 2003, and *The Cheetah Girls 2* in 2006; and

WHEREAS, she co-starred in the comedy film, *Head of State* in 2003, *Redemption* in 2004, *Madea's Family Reunion* in 2006, *The Women* in 2008, *The Rebound* in 2009, and *Mama, I Want to Sing* in 2011; and

WHEREAS, on television, Ms. Whitfield had recurring roles on *Boston Public*, *Without a Trace*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, and *Mistresses*; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, she was cast in the leading role of Lady Mae Greenleaf, the

main villain in an Oprah Winfrey original scripted drama series *Greenleaf* about the unscrupulous world of the Greenleaf family and their sprawling Memphis megachurch; and

WHEREAS, Lynn Whitfield merits a special measure of commendation and recognition for the depth of her artistic ability in theater, motion pictures, and television, and for the tremendous pride that she brings to her family, friends, the Baton Rouge community, and the state of Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Lynn Whitfield on the extraordinary accomplishments and recognition she has garnered as a thespian and wish for her a full measure of success and happiness in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Lynn Whitfield.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES