

House Resolution 253

By: Representatives Jackson of the 128th, Smyre of the 135th, and Williams of the 168th

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Honoring the accomplishments of Berry Gordy Jr.; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia recognizes Motown Records' Berry Gordy Jr. for his
3 ancestral roots in Washington County, Sandersville, Georgia; and
- 4 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia recognizes Berry Gordy Jr. for his accomplishments as
5 founder of Motown Records, an American record label owned by the Universal Music
6 Group. It was founded by Berry Gordy Jr. as Tamla Records on January 12, 1959, and
7 incorporated as Motown Record Corporation on April 14, 1960; and
- 8 WHEREAS; Berry's Motown Record Label, including its subsidiaries, was the highest
9 earning African American business for decades; and
- 10 WHEREAS, he built his empire on West Boulevard from an \$800 loan from his family
11 (Ber-Berry Co-op); and
- 12 WHEREAS, his autobiography, *To Be Loved: The Music, the Magic; the Memories of*
13 *Motown*, was released in 1994. He authored the book for *Motown-The Musical*, which
14 reached Broadway in 2013; and

15 WHEREAS, Berry has worn many hats in his lifetime: husband; father; television, film, and
16 record producer; and owner of the Jobete Company; and

17 WHEREAS, he was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1998; and

18 WHEREAS, he was honored by President Barack Obama with the National Medal of Arts;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, the road led him to his ancestral roots in 1978 when he; his son, Berry III; and
21 his father, Berry Gordy Sr., attended the annual Third Sunday Homecoming Service at Gordy
22 Grove Church of God in Christ. It was truly a historic and memorable moment for
23 Washington County and the Gordy Family; and

24 WHEREAS, Washington County is the home of his father, the late Berry Gordy Sr.; Berry
25 Gordy Jr. is the first cousin to the late Daniel Gordy, who was owner, operator, and master
26 barber of Gordy's Barber Shop for over 50 years, and he is also the first cousin to the late
27 Sam Gordy; and

28 WHEREAS, Berry's great-grandfather, James Thomas Gordy, a white plantation owner, and
29 his slave, Esther Johnson, had a son in 1854, whom she named Berry Gordy. Berry married
30 Lucy Hellum, and to this union were born 23 children; and

31 WHEREAS, Berry Gordy Jr., the seventh child of Berry Gordy Sr. and Bertha Fuller Gordy,
32 was born on November 28, 1929, in Detroit, Michigan; and

33 WHEREAS, when Berry was kicked out of his high school music class, he dropped out of
34 high school to pursue a boxing career, triumphing 13 out of 19 bouts; and

35 WHEREAS, Berry later worked the assembly line at Lincoln Mercury; it was here he
36 discovered that the monotony of putting upholstery in cars all day had one benefit. That is,
37 he could compose songs in his head while working; and

38 WHEREAS, he was drafted into the United States Army in 1951 and later earned his GED.

39 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
40 the members of this body recognize the accomplishments of Berry Gordy Jr. during Black
41 History Month.

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
43 and directed to make an appropriate copy of this resolution available for distribution to Berry
44 Gordy Jr.