

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 24

By DeBerry J

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the inaugural Jazz Hall of Fame and Awards sponsored by The Jazz Foundation of Memphis.

WHEREAS, Tennessee was the cradle of American music and the musical heritage of Memphis has been the very core, more than any other city across the nation, with its legacy of blues, rock, rhythm and blues, gospel, and jazz; and

WHEREAS, Memphis has a world-renowned and influential jazz tradition, dating back to the music's infancy in 1916, with jazz music critics and historians well-versed in the Memphis roots of a multitude of jazz legends; and

WHEREAS, to honor and celebrate this gem in the Memphis music culture and the American treasure that is jazz music, The Jazz Foundation of Memphis has established The Jazz Hall of Fame and Awards, with the inaugural event to take place on October 10, 2009; and

WHEREAS, this event will feature special presentations by Mayor A.C. Wharton, Dr. Vasco Smith, and others, honoring inductees and award recipients, live music by the honorees, a rare video of the Memphian piano genius Phineas Newborn, free clinics at area schools and the University of Memphis, and a meet-the-artist gala reception; and

WHEREAS, the first class of honorees to be inducted into the Jazz Hall of Fame are the late Phineas Newborn, a piano genius from Memphis, who was considered to be greatest living jazz pianist from the late 1950s to the late 1960s; the late Jimmie Lunceford, a saxophonist and band leader, whose influential big band in the 1930s and 1940s rivaled the orchestras of Ellington, Goodman, and Basie; and Gerald Wilson, who, alive and well at the age of ninety, has been recognized for more than fifty years as one of the premier composers, arrangers, and big band leaders of modern jazz; and

WHEREAS, those legendary jazz artists to be honored with Lifetime Achievement awards are George Coleman, who is considered one of the five greatest living saxophonists; saxophonist and flutist Charles Lloyd, world-renowned as an international treasure and one of jazz's great stylists; saxophonist Hank Crawford, who bridged the gap between blues and jazz; and the late pianist, composer, educator, and producer James Williams, who was dedicated to the advocacy of Memphis' jazz legacy; and

WHEREAS, selected to receive Significant Achievement awards are the pianist Harold Mabern, recognized as one of the great hard-bop pianists, and Mulgrew Miller, who as the pianist for the legendary Duke Ellington's band is considered a leader in the field and the most recorded pianist of his generation; and

WHEREAS, also receiving Significant Achievement awards are versatile and gifted reed player Bill Easley; exceptional drummer Tony Reedus, who has performed with scores of jazz greats; eight-time Grammy nominee saxophonist Kirk Whalum; and virtuoso guitarist Calvin Newborn; and

WHEREAS, Special Achievement award recipient Marvin Stamm, a trumpeter and flugelhorn musician, will perform, as will a number of award recipients along with other Memphis jazz musicians of renown; the evening will be highlighted by the performance of Hall of Fame inductee Gerald Wilson, who will lead a local big band, playing his charts and compositions organized by Gene Rush, former head of the University of Memphis Jazz Department; and

WHEREAS, it is highly appropriate and fitting that we pause to pay tribute to these outstanding musicians for their artistic contributions to the world and salute the tremendous heritage of Jazz music in Memphis; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend The Jazz Foundation of Memphis on the establishment of the Jazz Hall of Fame and Awards, congratulating the first class of Hall of Fame inductees and award winners on this truly special and historic occasion.

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