

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 619

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Michael Oher, All-American offensive lineman.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is pleased to specially honor and commend those successful collegiate student athletes who, through their magnificent exploits, bring honor to Tennessee and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Michael Oher, who was selected by the Baltimore Ravens with the twenty-third pick in the 2009 National Football League (NFL) draft; and

WHEREAS, a consensus first team All-American and first team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) offensive lineman for the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), Mr. Oher led his team to success during the 2008 season as the Ole Miss Rebels (9-4, 5-3 SEC) football team enjoyed one of the best seasons in the University's history; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Tennessee, Michael Oher overcame great adversity while growing up in inner-city Memphis; his hard work and dedication as a student at Memphis City Schools (MCS), Manassas High School, Ida B. Wells Academy, Westwood High School, and Briarcrest Christian School have translated to enormous success at the collegiate level; and

WHEREAS, growing up in a large family in the Memphis City Housing Development, Hurts Village, he wanted to become a basketball star. Michael was always polite, obedient, and appreciative as a young boy, and his mother, Denise Watkins-Oher, showed tremendous love and support for his enthusiasm and determination to succeed in school and in athletics; in response to this support, Michael brought home many awards and trophies during his junior high and high school years; and

WHEREAS, showing a deep concern for his well-being and academic and athletic progress, Mrs. Watkins-Oher allowed young Michael Oher to be adopted by Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy; and

WHEREAS, after reluctantly being convinced that his athletic prowess and size was better suited for football than basketball, Michael became a gridiron star at Briarcrest Christian School in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, with the help of Sean Tuohy, a former Ole Miss basketball player and television analyst for the Memphis Grizzlies, Tom Lemming, a national recruiting expert, and others, Mr. Oher diligently prepared himself for college both academically and physically; and

WHEREAS, after signing to play college football on scholarship with the University of Mississippi, Mr. Oher made immeasurable contributions to the Ole Miss Rebels football team through his leadership and talent; and

WHEREAS, with his six-foot-five-inch, 315 pound frame, the massive offensive tackle paved the way for Ole Miss running back, BenJarvus Green-Ellis to amass 1,000 yards rushing in both the 2006 and 2007 football seasons, and in his senior year, he helped the Ole Miss rushing attack gain over 2,400 yards in the 2008 football season; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Michael Oher's athletic prowess has garnered him not only All-American and All-SEC honors, but has also earned him numerous awards, including the Shug Jordan Award as the Southeast Offensive Lineman of the Year, the Colonel Earl "Red" Blaik Leadership-Scholarship Award, and he was named as an Outland Trophy finalist, a Connery Trophy finalist, and a Lombardi Award semifinalist; and

WHEREAS, after a successful senior year with Ole Miss, Michael Oher impressed the NFL scouts with his ability to control the line of scrimmage; with his hulking frame and excellent footwork, Michael Oher has the ability to make it almost impossible for defensive linemen to get around his pass protection; Mr. Oher's quick feet also make him one of the best run blockers, because of his ability to get to linebackers and neutralize their pursuit; and

WHEREAS, recently selected in the first round of the NFL draft by the Baltimore Ravens with the twenty-third pick overall, Mr. Oher's determination, work ethic, and talent have not only

made possible a memorable and successful football career, but also surely point toward success in his every future endeavor, including the NFL; and

WHEREAS, from growing up in Memphis to being a first round draft pick, becoming the first in his family to graduate from college along the way, Michael Oher and his miraculous life-story are the subject of Michael Lewis's book, *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*; and

WHEREAS, Michael Oher epitomizes the spirit and commitment to excellence that are characteristic of all true Tennesseans, and he should be specially recognized; 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 honor and congratulate Michael Oher upon attaining his bachelor's degree from the University of Mississippi and becoming the twenty-third player taken in the first round of the 2009 National Football League draft by the Baltimore Ravens, applaud his courage and determination to overcome all the odds, and wish him every success in all his future endeavors.

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