

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 812

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Simeon Booker in recognition of his achievements in the field of journalism, including reporting during the Civil Rights movement, as well as social and political commentary.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 1, 2017

Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself, Mr. JOYCE of Ohio, Ms. FUDGE, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. COHEN, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. SOTO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to Simeon Booker in recognition of his achievements in the field of journalism, including reporting during the Civil Rights movement, as well as social and political commentary.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress finds the following:

5 (1) Simeon Saunders Booker, Jr., was born on
6 August 27, 1918, in Baltimore, Maryland, to

1 Reberta Waring and Simeon Saunders Booker, Sr.,
2 a YMCA director and minister.

3 (2) After his family moved to Youngstown,
4 Ohio, Booker became interested in journalism.

5 (3) Booker promoted and wrote about Negro
6 League baseball teams in Youngstown's local news-
7 paper, The Vindicator.

8 (4) In 1945, he moved back to Ohio to work for
9 the Call and Post, where he became the first Afri-
10 can-American reporter to win a Newspaper Guild
11 Award for his series on Cleveland, Ohio, slum hous-
12 ing, and a Willkie Award for reporting on racial in-
13 equities in the public schools.

14 (5) In 1950, Booker was the recipient of the
15 Nieman Fellowship from Harvard University to
16 study journalism and develop his talent as a re-
17 porter.

18 (6) After leaving Harvard in 1951, Booker be-
19 came the first full-time African-American reporter at
20 The Washington Post.

21 (7) In 1955, he helped to advance the civil
22 rights movement with his famous coverage of the
23 Emmett Till murder and trial, turning a common
24 occurrence in the Deep South into a national trag-
25 edy that united the Black community.

1 (8) He remained at the forefront of the civil
2 rights movement, reporting on the 1957 integration
3 of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

4 (9) In 1961, he rode with the Congress on Ra-
5 cial Equality (CORE) Freedom Riders through the
6 Deep South.

7 (10) When the Freedom Riders were
8 firebombed and beaten in Anniston, Alabama, in a
9 Ku Klux Klan ambush, Booker arranged for their
10 rescue by calling U.S. Attorney General Robert F.
11 Kennedy.

12 (11) In two wartime tours of Vietnam in the
13 1960s, he interviewed Black troops on the front
14 lines, and took enemy fire in a helicopter with
15 United States Army General William Westmoreland
16 for reports for Jet and Ebony magazines.

17 (12) He has chronicled the most tumultuous pe-
18 riod in American history in two highly acclaimed
19 books, *Shocking the Conscience: A Reporter's Ac-*
20 *count of the Civil Rights Movement* (University
21 *Press of Mississippi, 2013)*, and *Black Man's Amer-*
22 *ica* (Prentice Hall, 1964).

23 (13) Often called the “dean of the black press”,
24 as chief of Ebony and Jet magazines’ Washington
25 bureau, he interviewed presidents, senators and rep-

1 representatives, members of the judiciary, cabinet offi-
2 cers, foreign ambassadors, and other important
3 members of the Washington community. His col-
4 umn, “Ticker Tape U.S.A.” became a must-read for
5 politicians and government officials.

6 (14) He covered every Presidential election
7 since the Eisenhower Administration in his fifty-
8 three years with Johnson Publishing until he retired
9 in 2007.

10 (15) In 1982, Booker received one of the most
11 prestigious awards in journalism, the National Press
12 Club’s Fourth Estate Award.

13 (16) His honors and awards include: Nieman
14 Fellowship, Harvard University 1950; elected presi-
15 dent of the Capitol Press Club, 1956; Fourth Estate
16 Award, National Press Club, 1982; inducted into
17 Hall of Fame, Washington Chapter of Sigma Delta
18 Chi, and Hall of Fame of Washington, DC, 1984;
19 Master Communicators Award, National Black
20 Media Coalition, 1998; Phoenix Award, Congres-
21 sional Black Caucus Foundation, 2010; inducted
22 into Hall of Fame, National Association of Black
23 Journalists, 2013.

1 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

2 (a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of
3 the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tem-
4 pore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements
5 for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold
6 medal of appropriate design, to Simeon Saunders Booker,
7 Jr., in recognition of his achievements in the field of jour-
8 nalism, including reporting during the Civil Rights move-
9 ment, as well as social and political commentary.

10 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For purposes of the
11 presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary
12 of the Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Sec-
13 retary”) shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems,
14 devices, and inscriptions to be determined by the Sec-
15 retary.

16 **SEC. 3. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

17 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
18 bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 2
19 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, at
20 a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof, including labor,
21 materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses,
22 and the cost of the gold medal.

23 **SEC. 4. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

24 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-
25 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter
26 51 of title 31, United States Code.

1 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
2 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
3 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
4 items.

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