

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 15

Acknowledging the lifelong service of Griffin Boyette Bell, a legal icon, to the State of Georgia and to the United States.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 16, 2009

Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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## RESOLUTION

Acknowledging the lifelong service of Griffin Boyette Bell, a legal icon, to the State of Georgia and to the United States.

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell was born on October 31, 1918, in Americus, Georgia, to Thelma Leola Pilcher and Adlai Cleveland Bell, a cotton farmer;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell died on January 5, 2009, at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, after enduring long-term kidney disease and a battle with pancreatic cancer;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell was raised in the Shiloh community outside of Americus until his family moved into Americus to establish a tire retail store;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell proved himself a superior student in the Americus public schools, and later, at Georgia Southwestern College, also in Americus;

Whereas in 1942, Griffin Boyette Bell was drafted into the Army, where he served in the Quartermaster Corps and Transportation Corps;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell, while stationed at Fort Lee, Virginia, met and married Mary Powell, who also had family ties to Americus, Georgia, and they later had one son, Griffin Jr.;

Whereas in 1946, Griffin Boyette Bell, after being discharged from active duty in the Army with the rank of major, enrolled in Mercer University School of Law in Macon, Georgia;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell worked at the law firm of Anderson, Anderson, and Walker while in law school;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell, while still a law student, passed the Georgia bar examination and was appointed city attorney of Warner Robins, Georgia;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell, after graduating with honors from Mercer University School of Law in 1948, practiced law in Savannah, Georgia and Rome, Georgia;

Whereas in 1953, Griffin Boyette Bell accepted an offer to join the Atlanta law firm of Spalding, Sibley, Troutman and Kelley, later renamed King and Spalding;

Whereas in 1958, Griffin Boyette Bell was appointed chief of staff to Governor Ernest Vandiver and, while serving in that capacity, was influential in organizing the Sibley Commission, which mapped Georgia's approach to school desegregation;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell, while chief of staff to Governor Ernest Vandiver, helped moderate State policy concerning civil rights and was instrumental in keeping Georgia's schools open during that turbulent period;

Whereas in 1961, Griffin Boyette Bell was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, where he served for 14 years and often played an instrumental role in mediating disputes during the peak of the United States civil rights movement;

Whereas in 1976, President Jimmy Carter nominated Griffin Boyette Bell to be the 72nd Attorney General of the United States, and he was confirmed to that position on January 25, 1977;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell brought independence and professionalism to the Department of Justice during his tenure as Attorney General by daily posting his third-party contacts, including meetings and calls with the White House, Members of Congress, or other individuals who were not in the Justice Department;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell, in his capacity as Attorney General, advised the Carter administration and helped to increase the number of women and minorities serving on the Federal bench, including by recruiting Wade McCree, an African-American judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, to serve as Solicitor General of the United States and Drew S. Days III, an African-American lawyer for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, to head the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell led negotiations to divide his former appellate court, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, then spanning from Georgia to Texas, into two courts: a new United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit based in New Orleans and the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit based in Atlanta;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell, upon resignation as Attorney General in August 1979, was appointed by President Jimmy Carter as the Special Ambassador to the Helsinki Convention;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell served as a member of the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on South Africa from 1985 to 1987;

Whereas in 1989, Griffin Boyette Bell was appointed by President George H. W. Bush as the Vice Chairman of the President's Commission on Federal Ethics Law Reform;

Whereas Griffin Boyette Bell served as counsel to President George H. W. Bush during the Iran-Contra affair investigation;

Whereas in September 2004, Griffin Boyette Bell was appointed Chief Judge of the United States Court of Military Commission Review; and

Whereas, during Griffin Boyette Bell's career as a lawyer, he specialized in corporate internal investigations, many of which were high profile, including investigations of E.F. Hutton following Federal indictments for that firm's cash management practices, Exxon Valdez after an oil spill in Alaska, and Procter and Gamble after rumors circulated

that that company's moon-and-stars logo was a satanic symbol: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) acknowledges the lifelong service of Griffin  
3       Boyette Bell, a legal icon, to the State of Georgia  
4       and to the United States; and

5               (2) commends Griffin Boyette Bell for his ten-  
6       ure as Attorney General of the United States and  
7       his commitment to the United States civil rights  
8       movement.

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