

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 226

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of James Cleveland “Jesse” Owens and honoring him for his accomplishments and steadfast commitment to promoting the civil rights of all people.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KIRK, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. SESSIONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of James Cleveland “Jesse” Owens and honoring him for his accomplishments and steadfast commitment to promoting the civil rights of all people.

Whereas James Cleveland “Jesse” Owens was born on September 12, 1913 in Oakville, Alabama;

Whereas Jesse Owens, the youngest of 10 children of sharecroppers and the grandson of a slave, moved with his family at the age of 9 to Cleveland, Ohio as part of the Great Migration;

Whereas, as a student at Fairmount Junior High School, Jesse Owens broke junior high school world records for the high jump and the broad jump;

Whereas Jesse Owens attended East Technical High School in Cleveland, Ohio where, as a member of the track team, he placed first in 75 of the 79 races he entered during his senior year, set the world record in the 220-yard dash, and tied the world record in the 100-yard dash;

Whereas Jesse Owens, the “Buckeye Bullet”, matriculated at the Ohio State University in 1933 after attracting national attention as a high school athlete;

Whereas, while attending classes, training, and breaking a number of track and field records, Jesse Owens worked various jobs, including as an elevator operator at the Ohio State Capitol, a waiter, a gas station attendant, and a library employee;

Whereas, due to his race, Jesse Owens was barred from living on campus at the Ohio State University, denied service at restaurants near the University, and forced to stay in segregated hotels;

Whereas, on May 25, 1935, in a 45-minute period during the Big Ten Track and Field Championships in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Jesse Owens, competing with an injured back, tied the world record in the 100-yard dash and set new world records in the long jump, the 220-yard dash, and the 220-yard low hurdles;

Whereas, as of the 2012 Summer Olympics, only two men had surpassed the long jump record Jesse Owens set in 1935;

Whereas, at the 1936 Summer Olympics, Jesse Owens won 4 gold medals, tied the world record in the 100-meter dash, and set new Olympic records in the 200-meter race, the long jump, and the 400-meter relay;

Whereas Jesse Owens' resilience and heroic performance at the 1936 Summer Olympics exposed the struggle against racial bigotry and publicly defied Adolf Hitler's intention of proving that ethnicity was a predetermining factor for achievement;

Whereas the record-breaking performance by Jesse Owens at the 1936 Summer Olympics was never recognized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt or President Harry S. Truman, but was later recognized in 1955 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who referred to Jesse Owens as an "Ambassador of Sport";

Whereas, following his Olympic career, Jesse Owens resumed his commitment to public service by spending much of his time working with community groups such as the Boys Clubs of America, chronicling his personal story to magnify the importance of equality and civil rights;

Whereas, during the 1950s, Jesse Owens worked with the Department of State to promote democracy abroad as an Ambassador of Goodwill during the Cold War and advocated for socioeconomic equality, individuality, freedom, and love of country;

Whereas Jesse Owens was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Gerald R. Ford in 1976 and the Living Legend Award by President Jimmy Carter in 1979, and was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by President George H.W. Bush in 1990; and

Whereas the integrity, courage, and strength of character that Jesse Owens demonstrated remain an example for all people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

- 1 (1) honors and celebrates the 100th anniversary
- 2 of the birth of James Cleveland “Jesse” Owens; and
- 3 (2) supports and encourages the people of the
- 4 United States to recognize the contributions of Jesse
- 5 Owens to the Olympic Games, collegiate athletics,
- 6 international race relations, and democracy.

