

1 SJR80
2 218754-3
3 By Senators Allen, Singleton, Smitherman, Figures,
4 Coleman-Madison, Albritton, Barfoot, Beasley, Butler,
5 Chambliss, Chesteen, Dunn, Elliott, Givhan, Gudger, Hatcher,
6 Holley, Jones, Livingston, Marsh, McClendon, Melson, Orr,
7 Price, Reed, Roberts, Sanders-Fortier, Scofield, Sessions,
8 Shelnutt, Stutts, Waggoner, Weaver, Whatley and Williams
9 RFD:
10 First Read: 15-MAR-22

1 SJR80

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4 ENROLLED, SJR80,

5 MOURNING THE PASSING OF MRS. AUTHERINE LUCY FOSTER,
6 THE FIRST BLACK STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA.

7
8 WHEREAS, it is with profound sadness that we note
9 the death on March 2, 2022, of Mrs. Autherine Lucy Foster of
10 at the age of 92 years; and

11 WHEREAS, Mrs. Foster had no particular desire to be
12 a civil rights pioneer; growing up as the youngest of 10
13 children in an Alabama farm family, she simply wanted to get
14 the best education her state could offer; and

15 WHEREAS, she obtained a Bachelor's Degree in English
16 from the historically Black Miles College in Fairfield,
17 Alabama, in 1952; but then, though she was a reserved, shy
18 person, she took a daring step: She applied for entrance to
19 her state's flagship educational institution, The University
20 of Alabama, and was accepted - at least until university
21 officials discovered she was Black and promptly told her that
22 a mistake had been made and she would not be welcome; and

23 WHEREAS, so began the legal fight that culminated in
24 1956, nearly two years after the Supreme Court found
25 segregation in public schools and colleges unconstitutional in

1 the landmark Brown V. Board of Education decision, when Ms.
2 Lucy became the first Black student at Alabama; and

3 WHEREAS, her case was the first to test the Supreme
4 Court's decree giving Federal District Court judges the
5 authority to implement the Brown decision, and she was beaten
6 back; but when she died at home in Lipscomb, Alabama, she was
7 remembered for her courage and dignity in waging a fight that
8 led directly to sustained integration at Alabama seven years
9 later, in the face of Governor George C. Wallace's notorious
10 "stand in the schoolhouse door" defiance; and

11 WHEREAS, Mrs. Lucy married Hugh Lawrence Foster, a
12 divinity student, in April 1956, and they moved to Texas; she
13 sought teaching posts, but, as she recalled, interviewers
14 would say to her, "You were the infamous Miss Lucy, and we
15 don't want you to come to our school"; she eventually did
16 teach at various schools in the South, but largely faded from
17 the civil rights scene while her husband pursued his Baptist
18 ministry and they reared a family; and

19 WHEREAS, The University of Alabama did not drop its
20 ban on Autherine Lucy; afterwards as a graduate student, she
21 attended commencement ceremonies and received a Master's
22 Degree in Education while her daughter, Grazia, received her
23 Bachelor's Degree in Corporate Finance; she said that she was
24 still bitter over her treatment, but refused to spend time
25 thinking about it; and

1 WHEREAS, in November 2010, the university dedicated
2 the Autherine Lucy Clock Tower; in 2019, she was awarded an
3 honorary doctorate by the university; and less than three
4 weeks before she died, the university named the building of
5 its College of Education in her honor; it had earlier been
6 named for David Bibb Graves, a former Alabama governor and Ku
7 Klux Klan leader; and

8 WHEREAS, survivors include her children, Angela
9 Dickerson, Grazia Kungu and Chrystal Foster; six
10 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild; now therefore,

11 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
12 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the death of Mrs. Autherine
13 Lucy Foster is recorded with deep sadness, and this resolution
14 is offered in tribute to her life and with heartfelt sympathy
15 to her family, whose grief is shared by many.

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President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Representatives

SJR80
Senate 15-MAR-22
I hereby certify that the within Senate Joint Resolution
originated in and was adopted by the Senate.

Patrick Harris,
Secretary.

House of Representatives
Adopted: 31-MAR-22

By: Senator Allen