

By Senator Rodriguez

39-03477-22

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Senate Resolution

A resolution remembering former United States Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek and honoring her legacy of leadership, advocacy, and public service and her countless contributions to this state.

WHEREAS, Carrie P. Meek was born in Tallahassee on April 29, 1926, to Willie and Carrie Pittman, who began their lives together as sharecroppers, and

WHEREAS, as the granddaughter of "Miss Mandy," a slave born and raised in Lilly, Georgia, Carrie P. Meek grew up during the turbulent Jim Crow era but would overcome many racial, gender, and educational barriers during her lifetime, and

WHEREAS, in 1946, Carrie P. Meek earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Physical Education from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), where she was a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and

WHEREAS, in the 1940s, a state law prohibited Black students from attending public graduate schools, which forced Carrie P. Meek to enroll out of state at the University of Michigan, where she earned a Master of Science in Public Health and Physical Education, and

WHEREAS, upon graduating from the University of Michigan, Carrie P. Meek accepted a position at Bethune-Cookman College as an instructor and became the institution's first female basketball coach, and

WHEREAS, Carrie P. Meek later returned to FAMU as a health and physical education instructor, a position she would hold until 1961, and

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30 WHEREAS, after leaving FAMU, Carrie P. Meek continued her
31 career in higher education at Miami Dade Community College,
32 where she became the first Black professor, associate dean, and
33 assistant to the vice president of the college, and

34 WHEREAS, in 1978, Carrie P. Meek ran for the Florida House
35 of Representatives and defeated 12 other candidates to win her
36 place in the Florida Legislature, serving from 1979 to 1983 and
37 chairing the Education Appropriations Subcommittee, and

38 WHEREAS, beginning in 1983, Carrie P. Meek served as the
39 first Black woman elected to the Florida Senate and the first
40 Black legislator to serve in that legislative body in more than
41 a century, and

42 WHEREAS, as a skilled lawmaker who was once called "the
43 conscience of the Florida Senate," Carrie P. Meek passed
44 significant legislation to promote literacy and encourage
45 students to stay in school and was a long-time champion of
46 housing rights, and

47 WHEREAS, in 1992, Carrie P. Meek continued her trailblazing
48 political career, representing Florida's 17th Congressional
49 District as a member of the United States House of
50 Representatives and becoming one of the first Black members from
51 this state elected to the United States Congress since the
52 Reconstruction era, and

53 WHEREAS, while serving in the United States Congress,
54 Carrie P. Meek was a member of the powerful House Committee on
55 Appropriations and worked to secure \$100 million in aid to
56 rebuild Dade County as the area recovered from Hurricane Andrew,
57 and

58 WHEREAS, Carrie P. Meek built her legacy on advocating for

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59 equal and fair treatment for all individuals, regardless of the
60 color of their skin, stating, "I didn't go into politics with a
61 chip on my shoulder, but I let people up there know I expected
62 to get the same results as anybody else," and

63 WHEREAS, after leaving the United States Congress, Carrie
64 P. Meek returned to her community to fully dedicate herself to
65 charitable activities through the Carrie Meek Foundation, which
66 serves as an extension of the public service to which she was
67 committed throughout her lifetime, and

68 WHEREAS, on November 28, 2021, Carrie P. Meek passed away,
69 leaving behind a legacy that will significantly enrich future
70 generations of Florida residents, NOW, THEREFORE,

71

72 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

73

74 That former United States Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek is
75 remembered and her legacy of leadership, advocacy, and public
76 service and her countless contributions to this state are
77 honored.

78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution, with
79 the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to the family of
80 former United States Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek as a tangible
81 token of the sentiments expressed herein.