
ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: the life and public service of Marcia P. Coggs.

Whereas, Marcia P. Coggs was born on April 5, 1928, in Kansas City, Kansas, and died on December 9, 2003, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and

Whereas, she married Isaac Newton Coggs in 1952, who preceded her in death in 1973; and

Whereas, Mrs. Coggs was first elected to the Wisconsin assembly in 1976, serving in the 1977 through 1991 sessions; and

Whereas, she followed in the footsteps of her husband, who was one of the first African-Americans elected to the Wisconsin legislature (serving 12 years in the assembly); and

Whereas, Mrs. Coggs was the first black woman elected to the Wisconsin legislature; and

Whereas, during her tenure in the legislature, Mrs. Coggs was a member on the joint committee on finance; and

Whereas, she took great pride in initiating a bill to limit the tenure of the City of Milwaukee police and fire chiefs; and

Whereas, she also introduced bills to allow nonvoters to file complaints against police and to permit juveniles to make restitution instead of going to jail; and

Whereas, she introduced legislation focused on civil rights, including protesting apartheid in South Africa and calling for divestiture of state funds in that country; and

Whereas, she believed perseverance in addressing injustices such as apartheid would bring change; and

Whereas, she declared, "It takes the black and white keys of the piano to play 'The Star-Spangled Banner' You can't do it with all white or all black"; and

Whereas, by the end of her tenure in the legislature, she was called the "Conscience of the State of Wisconsin"; and

Whereas, she will be remembered as being "small in physical stature, but a giant in terms of her impact"; and

Whereas, over the years, she received many honors, including being named Queen Mother of the African World Festival in 2001; and

Whereas, she was the matriarch of her family and she was also the matriarch of a political legacy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That the members of the Wisconsin legislature commend the devoted public service that Marcia P. Coggs contributed to this state and her community, express their sorrow at her death, and extend their condolences to her family and friends; and, be it further

Resolved, That the assembly chief clerk shall provide copies of this joint resolution to Mrs. Coggs' daughter, Milwaukee County Supervisor Elizabeth Coggs-Jones, and her nephews, State Senator Spencer Coggs, State Representative Leon D. Young, Harold C. Young III, and Eric Young.

Senator Alan J. Lasee
President of the Senate

Representative John G. Gard
Speaker of the Assembly

Date

Patrick E. Fuller
Assembly Chief Clerk