Relating to: honoring Sidney Poitier.

   Whereas, the brilliant and groundbreaking actor and diplomat Sidney Poitier was one of the most impactful actors in Hollywood history; and

   Whereas, Sidney Poitier was born in Miami, Florida, to Evelyn and Reginald James Poitier. Despite being born on American soil, Mr. Poitier grew up on Cat Island in the Bahamas with little formal education; and

   Whereas, at the age of 14, Mr. Poitier came back to America to live with his brother, where he witnessed firsthand the racial injustices that plagued Black American communities; and

   Whereas, Mr. Poitier worked his way to New York, where he worked several jobs to make ends meet. While in New York, he began his venture into acting by auditioning for the American Negro Theatre; and

   Whereas, while Mr. Poitier’s performance was rejected because of his lack of education and non-American accent, he persevered to keep working towards becoming an actor; and
Whereas, in 1946, Mr. Poitier was called to take the stage in an all-Black production of *Lysistrata*, where he made his debut performance; and

Whereas, Mr. Poitier began to star in numerous roles in television and cinema, including as Dr. Brooks in *No Way Out* (1950), as Gregory Miller in *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), and as Noah Cullen in *The Defiant Ones* (1958), for which he received an Oscar Nomination for Best Actor; and

Whereas, in 1963, Mr. Poitier became the first Black actor to win an Oscar for Best Actor, which he won for his brilliant performance as Homer Smith in *Lilies of the Field* (1963). This performance also won him the Golden Globe for Best Actor; and

Whereas, in addition to his trailblazing acting career, Mr. Poitier was also a diplomat, activist, and ambassador in his time; and

Whereas, Mr. Poitier was a participant in the March on Washington in 1963 and remained an outspoken voice against racial injustice throughout his life; and

Whereas, Mr. Poitier was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1974 for his contributions and impact on the world stage; and

Whereas, Mr. Poitier served as The Bahamas’ Ambassador to Japan from 2002–2007 and also served as The Bahamas’ ambassador to UNESCO; and

Whereas, in 2009, Mr. Poitier was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama for his talent and hard work in advancing the nation’s dialogue on race and respect; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, That** the members of the Wisconsin Legislature join in honoring Mr. Sidney Poitier as one of the legends in the Golden Age of Hollywood.

(END)