

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005**

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 198
Second Edition Engrossed 5/9/05**

Sponsors: Representatives Farmer-Butterfield, B. Allen (Primary Sponsors); Lucas, Luebke, Moore, Parmon, and Weiss.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

February 14, 2005

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF MILTON F.
2 FITCH, SR., AND CORA WHITTED FITCH, DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS AND
3 CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS.

4 Whereas, Milton F. Fitch, Sr., of New Haven, Connecticut, and Cora Jordan
5 Whitted of Wilson, North Carolina, were married in 1941; and

6 Whereas, Milton Fitch served nearly five years in the United States Army,
7 earning several medals and three battle stars and distinguishing himself during World
8 War II by contributing to the success of the Red Ball Express, a massive convoy system
9 that delivered supplies to the Allied troops at the war front in Europe; and

10 Whereas, after the war, Milton and Cora Fitch settled in the City of Wilson
11 where he became a postal worker and she became a schoolteacher; and

12 Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch were married for 47 years and were the
13 loving parents of five children; and

14 Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch stressed the importance of education in their
15 household and were proud that Jerome and Christine earned doctorate degrees, Milton,
16 Jr., and Patricia received law degrees, and Ernestine obtained a medical degree; and

17 Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch became strong advocates for civil rights and
18 frequently took action without regard to their own personal safety to improve the unjust
19 and inequitable conditions faced by African-Americans in their community; and

20 Whereas, Milton Fitch won a lawsuit against the federal government to
21 become the first African-American letter carrier in the City of Wilson since
22 Reconstruction and helped to initiate a lawsuit against Wilson County over the county's
23 voting patterns, a case that was argued before the United States Supreme Court and led
24 to the county's adoption of a ward system of representation; and

25 Whereas, Milton Fitch was instrumental in securing burial space for poor
26 veterans in the Rest Haven Cemetery and played a key role convincing the Wilson
27 County government to remove a plaque on the courthouse that listed the county's World
28 War II dead by race; and

1 Whereas, Cora Fitch organized the first African-American Girl Scout troop in
2 Wilson and was elected to the Wilson County Board of County Commissioners in 1986;
3 and

4 Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch also made significant contributions to their
5 community through their involvement in numerous social, fraternal, and civic
6 organizations; and

7 Whereas, Milton Fitch served as the North Carolina Coordinator for the
8 Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a role which caused him to participate in
9 activities throughout the South, was active in the NAACP, and worked on the
10 campaigns of candidates seeking national and statewide offices; and

11 Whereas, Milton Fitch was a 33rd degree Mason and on October 7, 1995, was
12 elected Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons, Jurisdiction of North
13 Carolina, an honor bestowed upon him for his many years of commitment and
14 dedication to the Masons; and

15 Whereas, Milton Fitch held a number of other positions as a Mason and was
16 associated with many lodges, including Mizpah Temple #66 and C.A. Whitehead
17 Consistory #188; and

18 Whereas, Cora Fitch served on the boards of the Wilson County Department
19 of Social Services and the Wilson County Library and was a founding member of the
20 Wilson Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., an organization that
21 boasts more than 200,000 members across the country and more than 150 chapters in
22 the South Atlantic Region; and

23 Whereas, Cora Fitch was active in the Jackson Chapel First Baptist Church,
24 serving as Minister of Music and Youth Choir Director; and

25 Whereas, Milton and Cora Fitch were especially proud that their son, Milton
26 F. 'Toby' Fitch, Jr., served approximately 19 years in the North Carolina House of
27 Representatives and was a majority leader, and their daughter, Dr. Christine Fitch,
28 serves on the Wilson County Board of Education and has done so for a number of years;
29 and

30 Whereas, Cora Fitch died on August 7, 1987, and Milton Fitch died on
31 November 2, 1995; Now, therefore,

32 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

33 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly expresses its deep appreciation for the
34 lives, accomplishments, and courage of Milton F. Fitch, Sr., and Cora Whitted Fitch,
35 and for the service they rendered to the citizens in their community, the State of North
36 Carolina, and the nation.

37 **SECTION 2.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
38 resolution to the family of Milton F. Fitch, Sr., and Cora Whitted Fitch.

39 **SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.