

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 801

Honoring the life and enduring legacy of William “Willie” Howard Mays,
Jr.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2024

Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Ms. BUTLER, Mr. TUBERVILLE, and Mr. PADILLA)
submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Honoring the life and enduring legacy of William “Willie”
Howard Mays, Jr.

Whereas William “Willie” Howard Mays, Jr. (referred to in this preamble as “Mays”) was born in the former town of Westfield, in Jefferson County, Alabama, in 1931, and began playing baseball at an early age with his father, “Cat” Mays, who was an accomplished baseball player himself;

Whereas Mays was a standout multi sport athlete at Fairfield Industrial High School, leading the basketball team in scoring, playing multiple positions on the football team, and showcasing his natural talent for baseball;

Whereas, in 1948, Mays began his professional baseball career at age 16 in the Negro American League, 11 years

before the complete integration of Major League Baseball in 1959;

Whereas, in 1948, Mays recorded his first professional hit at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama, while playing for the Birmingham Black Barons, and used his outstanding fielding, batting, and base running ability to help lead the team to the 1948 Negro World Series;

Whereas, in 1950, Mays signed a contract with the New York Giants after graduating from Fairfield Industrial High School, spent a brief year in the minor leagues, and was quickly called up to play his first game for the New York Giants on May 24, 1951;

Whereas, in 1951, Mays was voted the National League Rookie of the Year after recording 68 runs batted in and 20 home runs in 121 games;

Whereas, from 1952 to 1954, Mays was drafted into the Army and served the United States during the Korean War;

Whereas during Mays military service, he spent most of his time in the Army at Fort Eustis, Virginia, as an athletic instructor and played baseball for the Fort Eustis Wheels;

Whereas, after Mays finished his service in the Army, Mays returned to help the New York Giants win the 1954 World Series by robbing a Cleveland batter of a go-ahead run with an implausible basket catch in deep center field to win game 1 of the 1954 World Series, in a moment that will be forever remembered as “The Catch”;

Whereas Mays earned a remarkable number of awards and accolades throughout his career in Major League Baseball, including—

- (1) 24 All-Star Game selections;
- (2) 2 National League Most Valuable Player Awards;
- (3) 12 Gold Glove Awards; and
- (4) 4 National League home run leader titles;

Whereas Mays achieved a .302 lifetime batting average while recording 3,293 hits, 660 home runs, and a Major League Baseball all-time record of 7,112 putouts from the outfield;

Whereas Mays is the only player in Major League Baseball history with more than 300 home runs, 300 stolen bases, 3,000 career hits, and a career batting average greater than .300;

Whereas the accomplishments by Mays were not fully recognized until 2024, when Major League Baseball incorporated the statistics from the Negro American League into the Major League Baseball historical records;

Whereas, in 1979, Mays was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame on his first ballot;

Whereas, as a tribute to the indelible impact and enduring legacy of Mays, whose jersey number was 24, the San Francisco Giants and New York Mets retired the jersey number 24 so that no other player on those teams could wear that number again;

Whereas the address of the stadium of the San Francisco Giants is 24 Willie Mays Plaza, in recognition of the contributions and impact that Mays had on the San Francisco Giants organization throughout his life;

Whereas, in 2015, Mays was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest honor the President can award to a civilian;

Whereas, on June 18, 2024, Mays died at 93 years old, 2 days before Major League Baseball hosted its first ever game at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama, where Mays made his professional baseball debut 76 years earlier; and

Whereas Mays personified the American Dream by relying on his relentless work ethic and determination to become an immortal giant of the national pastime of baseball, all while inspiring millions of people across the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) honors the timeless values of hard work and
3 sacrifice that William “Willie” Howard Mays, Jr.
4 embodied;

5 (2) recognizes the inspiration that William
6 “Willie” Howard Mays, Jr. was and continues to be
7 for generations of people in the United States; and

8 (3) celebrates the historic feats that William
9 “Willie” Howard Mays, Jr. achieved while playing
10 baseball, the game that he loved.

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