

2021 -- H 5660

=====
LC002044
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING DEEPEST CONDOLENCES ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE
ALTON W. WILEY, THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN JUDGE TO SIT ON THE RHODE
ISLAND DISTRICT AND SUPERIOR COURTS

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Williams, Blazejewski, Hull, Henries,
Alzate, Abney, Ranglin-Vassell, Barros, and Biah

Date Introduced: February 23, 2021

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, It is with deep sadness that this House has learned of the passing of the
2 Honorable Justice Alton W. Wiley, a highly-respected Justice, and the first African-American
3 Jurist to sit on the Rhode Island District and Superior Courts; and

4 WHEREAS, Alton Wiley was a son of the late Olive and William Wiley, and the brother
5 of Lucille Davis, Beverly Wiley, Edwin Wiley, and the late George Wiley, and Shirley Green.
6 He was the devoted partner of Mary Ann Conlan for more than forty years and the beloved father
7 of Alton Wiley, Jr., Jacqueline Wiley and Deane Wiley; and

8 WHEREAS, Justice Wiley graduated from the University of Rhode Island, where he
9 excelled in both the classroom and athletics, earning Hall of Fame status in track and field. He
10 also participated in the University's Army ROTC program, and served our nation with honor and
11 distinction as an active duty Second Lieutenant in France. From 1953 to 1979, he continued his
12 service in the United States Army Reserve, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel; and

13 WHEREAS, Justice Wiley attained his law degree from Boston University and built a
14 sterling legal reputation in the ensuing years, serving as an Assistant United States Attorney, an
15 Assistant Legal Counsel in Employment Security, Assistant Public Defender, and as a member of
16 the Rhode Island Governor's Legislative Counsel; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1981, the Honorable Alton Wiley became the first African-American to
18 serve on the Rhode Island District Court when he was appointed by former Governor J. Joseph
19 Garrahy. He was subsequently elevated to the Rhode Island Superior Court, once again earning

1 the recognition of becoming the first African-American to serve as a Superior Court Justice.
2 After a long and distinguished career, he retired in 1994; and

3 WHEREAS, Honored numerous times during the course of his illustrious career, Justice
4 Wiley was the recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Rhode Island, was a
5 member of the URI College of Business Administration Hall of Fame, and was a former URI
6 Vice President of Student Affairs and Past President of the Alumni Association; and

7 WHEREAS, Justice Wiley was admired by all for his legal acumen, tireless work ethic,
8 abiding concern for all who appeared in his courtroom, regardless of their station in life, and for
9 the sagacious wisdom he continually dispensed from the bench; now, therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
11 expresses our gratitude for his devoted service to this State, and our deepest condolences to the
12 Wiley Family on the passing of the Honorable Justice Alton Wiley; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
14 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to Mary Ann Conlan, Alton W. Wiley, Jr.,
15 Jacqueline Wiley, Deane Wiley, Lucille Davis, Beverly Wiley, and Edwin Wiley.

=====
LC002044
=====